

THE Atlantic

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

THE YEAR OF TWO POPE

HOW "MR. INSIDE"
STEPPED INTO THE SHOES
OF "MR. OUTSIDE," AND
WHAT IT MEANS FOR
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY PAUL ELIE

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AT THE TOP OF THE AUTOMOBILE AT THE TOP OF THAT

THERE IS NO DENYING IT: IN THE HIERARCHY OF AUTOMOBILES AND THE COMPANIES THAT BUILD THEM, MERCEDES-BENZ AND THE S-CLASS LEAD THE WAY. FOR AS LONG AS THE S-CLASS HAS EXISTED, IT HAS BEEN THE STANDARD-BEARER. FOR AS LONG AS IT HAS BEEN ON THE WORLD'S MOTORWAYS, IT HAS BEEN FOLLOWED, STUDIED, ENVIED AND EMULATED MORE THAN ANY OTHER CAR.



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COMPANY IS ONE CAR.

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In design, it is a commanding vehicle — to say the least. Its muscular stance, dramatic wheel arches and sleek lines create an altogether striking presence, while its refined curves make this the most aerodynamic S-Class ever.

Inside, a world of true beauty awaits. The dash and center console are as functional as they are elegant. The Mercedes-Benz COMAND System places a world of technological wonder at your fingertips. Yet as advanced and sophisticated as this system is, it is refreshingly simple and intuitive. From the driver's seat, the entire environment is a study in ergonomics.

An abundance of hand-crafted natural surfaces makes the interior of your S-Class a product of masterful artisanship. Leathers, woods and metals of only the most refined grades are selected. Soft ambient lighting helps create a warm and comforting glow in the cabin. To be certain, you and your passengers are ensconced in an experience of luxury as only Mercedes-Benz can deliver it.

And perhaps no car boasts more attention to the concept of safety. A culmination of everything we have learned and pioneered in over a century, the 2007 S-Class is a moving library of patents. An intelligent safety system coordinates a vast series of components to work together to help protect driver and passengers before, during and after an accident. There is even

a night vision system available which enables you to see more clearly in the dark, extending your view of the road up to 500 feet.

INTRODUCING THE 9TH GENERATION S-CLASS.

Of course, a discussion of the newest generation S-Class would be incomplete without a mention of the sheer exhilaration of the driving experience. The car's Airmatic Suspension complements its copious power to produce a ride which is at once ultra-smooth and positively spellbinding. And for a car of this stature, handling is swift and certain. The outside world moves past in a silent blur as the 7-speed transmission helps to effortlessly propel the car forward.

You'll soon see the new S-Class on the road. Given its captivating beauty, it will be impossible to miss. And should you wish to view one up close, simply look in the same place each of its predecessors has been found: at the top.

Unlike any other.



Mercedes-Benz

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**The world consumes two barrels
of oil for every barrel discovered.**

So is this something you should be worried about?

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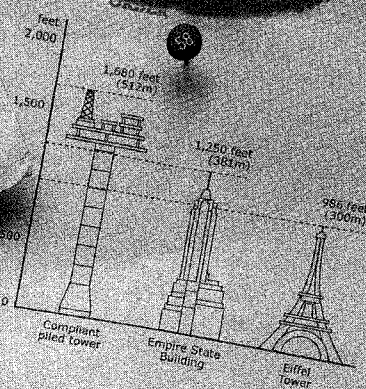
The world consumes 84 million barrels of oil a day.

The fact is, the world has been finding less oil than it's been using for twenty years now. Not only has demand been soaring, but the oil we've been finding is coming from places that are tough to reach. At the same time, more of this newly discovered oil is of the type that requires a greater investment to refine. And because demand for this precious resource will grow, according to some, by over 40% by 2025, fueling the world's growing economic prosperity will take a lot more energy from every possible source.

The energy industry needs to get more from existing fields while continuing to search for new reserves. Automakers must continue to improve fuel efficiency and perfect hybrid vehicles. Technological improvements are needed so that wind, solar and hydrogen can be more viable parts of the energy equation. Governments need to create energy policies that promote economically and environmentally sound development. Consumers must demand, and be willing to pay for, some of these solutions, while practicing conservation efforts of their own.

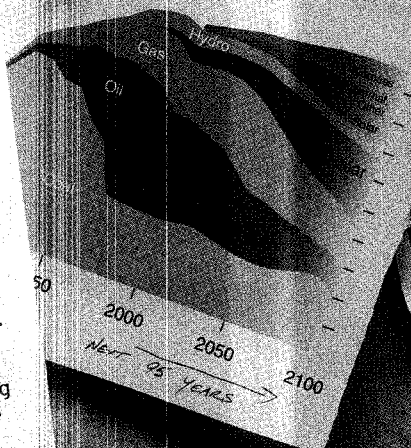
Inaction is not an option. But if everyone works together, we can balance this equation. We're taking some of the steps needed to get started, but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

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By 2030 the number of cars in the world will increase by 50%.

World Energy Demand



Chevron Steps Taken:

Thinking to the future:

- Committing more than \$300 million each year on clean and renewable energies

Finding even more energy today:

- In 2004, achieved exploration record 78% higher than 10-year industry average
- Using steamflooding to extract heavy oil that was previously unrecoverable - more than 1.3 billion barrels from one field alone



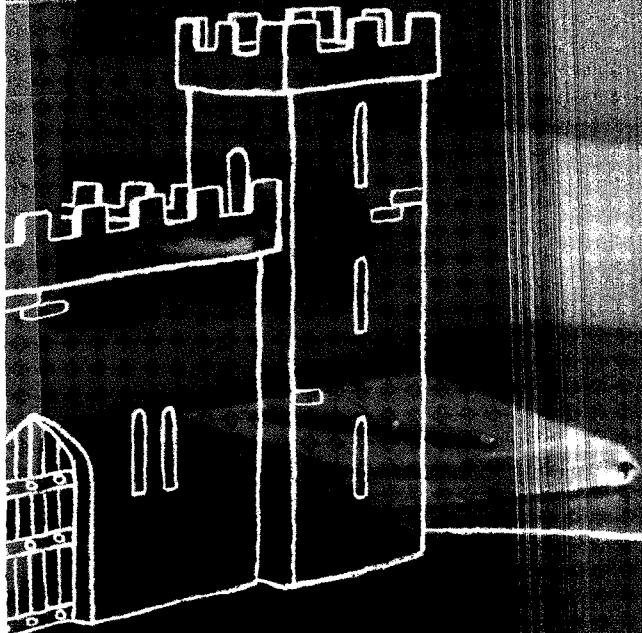
Human energy™



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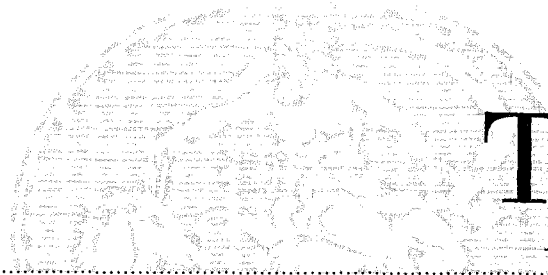
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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2006

It was this or a cruise.

(LUCKILY, HE GETS SEASICK.)



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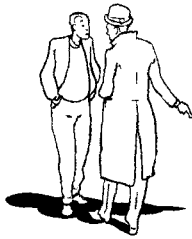
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With this issue *The Atlantic Monthly* begins a year-long celebration of our upcoming 150th anniversary.

Fifteen decades is a long time; only a handful of publications anywhere have exceeded that benchmark. A great deal has occurred since a small group of writers and editors met in the dining room of a Boston hotel to plan the first issue of what would become *The Atlantic Monthly*. The economy of the United States at the time was smaller than Britain's, and its armed forces lesser than those of France. Germany and Italy didn't exist, and *Das Kapital* and *The Origin of Species* hadn't been written. American territory already stretched from coast to coast, but there were only thirty-one states in the Union. The vote was restricted to men, and a system of public education was a thing of the future. The most salient fact about this country was that slavery remained legal in the United States. *The Atlantic's* founders were leaders of the abolitionist cause.

America has changed profoundly in the course of fifteen decades. In certain obvious ways *The Atlantic* has changed as well. It is no longer a pamphlet-sized magazine with a dull brown cover. Its readership, rather than consisting of a few tens of thousands primarily in the Northeast, now numbers 1.5 million across the country. The first issue, which featured an engraving of John Winthrop on the cover, was more literary than the magazine you are holding in your hands or viewing on a screen, though the bent toward public-affairs commentary and on-the-scene reporting was present from the start. James Russell Lowell's "The Election in November" (1860) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Chiefly About War Matters" (1862) are part of the genetic heritage of modern journalism.

But if some things about *The Atlantic Monthly* have changed in 150 years, the most important things have not.

First, the founders of the magazine understood that breaking news was not always worth paying attention to, and in fact could distract the public from important stories that needed to be told—and that took more time to tell. One of our early contributors, Henry David Thoreau, noting the impact of the telegraph, warned that soon we would be hearing minute-by-minute updates on Princess Adelaide's whooping cough. This concern is all the more relevant in our own era of round-the-clock cable and Internet news. Nobody in America complains, "I'm not getting my news bites fast enough!" People do complain that they're not getting the full

truth. They do complain that the foam of headlines, and of what Philip K. Dick might have called "pre-news," conceals vast shoals of reality.

Second, from the outset the magazine's vantage point had no roots in political ideology. *The Atlantic* would be a forum, not a pulpit. It would cover potentially anything and be open to the sharpest thinking and reporting, no matter how contrarian. There is of course nothing wrong with partisan newspapers and magazines—they are one of the glories of the free press in America. But *The Atlantic* was designed to be something else.

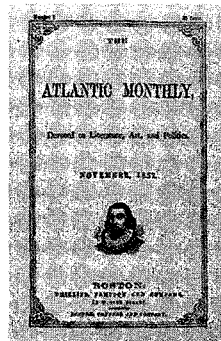
Third, the magazine has always tried to be entertaining as well as informative. From the beginning it has set aside a place for a special kind of humor, a kind that may be gentle, cerebral, or utterly off the wall, but is rarely broad. Mark Twain once said that he liked writing humor for *The Atlantic* because the editors allowed him to be funny without asking him to paint himself in stripes and stand on his head. Garrison Keillor (whose poetic parodies are published in this

issue) and Christopher Buckley carry on this tradition.

Finally, the founders of *The Atlantic* believed in what they called "the American idea." This was not some saccharine notion of American exceptionalism or a hyper-patriotic American boosterism. It was a recognition that America was an experiment, based on certain principles—an experiment that could fail, but would if successful offer a rare kind of hope. It could be easily contaminated—by ignorance, venality, selfishness, hatred, hubris. The founders were realists: the biggest threat of all, the slave system, was at the peak of its power, and the challenge of race, they knew, was destined to become the nation's central concern.

What is "the American idea"? It is the fractious, maddening approach to the conduct of human affairs that values equality despite its elusiveness, that values democracy despite its debasement, that values pluralism despite its messiness, that values the institutions of civic culture despite their flaws, and that values public life as something higher and greater than the sum of all our private lives. The founders of the magazine valued these things—and they valued the immense amount of effort it takes to preserve them from generation to generation.

That is the tie that binds fifteen decades. In the years before the Civil War it was not certain that the American idea would have a future. It still isn't. —THE EDITORS



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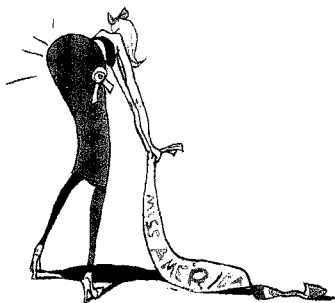
Global network of innovation



JANUARY 17

Enron's Day in Court

The major culprits in Enron's spectacular 2001 collapse, then the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history, go on trial today in federal court in Houston. Kenneth Lay, Jeff Skilling, and Rick Causey face more than thirty indictments each—mainly for fraud and conspiracy—and prison sentences that could last centuries. Early questionnaires sent to potential jurors bode poorly for the gang. Asked to do word association with the defendants' names, Houston-area respondents volunteered "liar," "cheat," and "wealthy individual who will most likely get off."



JANUARY 21

Can Miss America Get Her Groove Back?

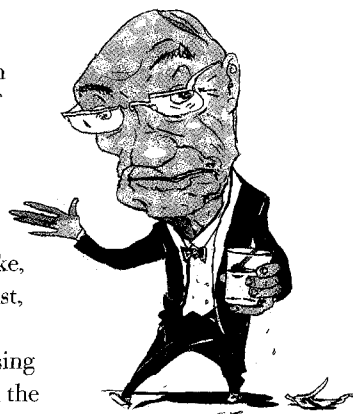
Last year Miss America got dumped: the eighty-five-year-

old beauty pageant, begun by Atlantic City locals hoping to stretch the summer tourist season, finally succumbed to financial woes and was dropped by ABC because of poor ratings. But contest organizers packed up their sashes and tiaras and skipped town for Las Vegas. Tonight the bathing beauties will try to rebound as they flaunt their heels, bikinis, and gauzy social nostrums in their new location, where the pageant will be broadcast on the CMT cable network.

FEBRUARY 1

Reining In Hedge Funds

A surge in popularity and a near-complete lack of oversight have made hedge funds the Wild West of high finance. These huge capital pools, which cater to wealthy individuals and institutions, currently manage nearly a trillion dollars in capital. Owing to a string of fraud cases last year (several hedge-fund managers simply spent their clients' investments), the Securities and Exchange Commission today begins requiring firms



JANUARY 31

Goodbye, Greenspan

Term limits today force Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, to end an eighteen-year tenure marked by steady growth, low inflation, and widespread acclaim. Ben Bernanke, a former Princeton economist, must fill the maestro's shoes at a time when inflated housing prices, rising debt rates, and the prospect of inflation threaten the economy. The incoming chairman is expected to be less political than Greenspan—who stumped for tax cuts and parts of Bush's Social Security privatization plan—and more scrutable. He advocates lifting the veil on Fed decision-making (and even supports giving explicit inflation targets) and has a knack for punchy, to-the-point declarations.

CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

capitalized at more than \$25 million to register with the agency, submit to audits, and provide their managers' qualifications (industry experts estimate that 20 percent of managers have fudged their résumés). Many of the most formidable firms, however, will escape this scrutiny through a loophole that exempts longer-term investments.



FEBRUARY 10-26

Chilly Reception for Olympic Cheats

If the Turin Winter Olympics seem a little poky, blame the Italians. The host country's anti-doping rules are so hard-line—enforced by police raids and jail time—that the International Olympic Committee pushed to suspend them to avoid the specter of athletes being led away in handcuffs. (The effort failed; the Italian minister of health told nervous athletes to "stay at home.") There will be 1,200 drug tests this year—a 45 percent increase from the Salt Lake City games four years ago, at which five athletes failed tests and two were stripped of gold medals.

FEBRUARY 23

Shoot-to-Kill Controversy in London

Following the official police investigation, an inquest

resumes today in the death of Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian resident of London killed by police officers in the nervous days following last July's Underground bombings. The case, initially presented as a regrettable but necessary thwarting of a possible suicide bomber, is now mired in controversy. Leaks from the investigation suggested that the Brazilian was neither fleeing the police nor wearing a suspiciously bulky jacket, as early accounts indicated, and that he was shot seven times in the head and once in the shoulder *after* an officer had restrained him.



FEBRUARY 28

Fat Tuesday, a Bit Thinner

The effects of Hurricane Katrina won't stop New Orleans's annual bacchanal, the Mardi Gras. Though some krewes—the civic groups that assemble the parades and floats—plan to sit it out, many of the largest return today for a truncated celebration: eight days instead of the usual twelve, with some minor route adjustments around areas still cleaning up from one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history.

—MATTHEW QUIRK



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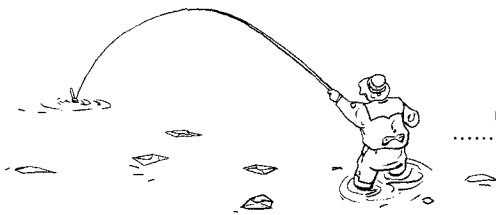


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is God an Accident?

Paul Bloom's excellent piece "Is God an Accident?" (December *Atlantic*) raises the question of what evolutionary events caused our brains to be hard-wired to embrace the idea of a supernatural, all-powerful being.

Perhaps it wasn't a genetic accident after all. Many years ago my anthropology professor at the University of Colorado offered this explanation, which still seems like a reasonable one: At some point some of our predecessors began to bury their dead to prepare them for what they may have believed was an afterlife. The clans that followed this practice had higher survival rates, owing to improved sanitation, than the clans that left their dead where they fell. This, in turn, served to pass along the genes that promote the notion of a supernatural god, and superstitions as well. Those genes are still with us today.

As Bloom points out, some 95 percent of human beings believe in a supernatural god. It stands to reason that the process of natural selection must have been at work here, just as there are good evolutionary reasons why almost all human beings crave fats and sugars, exhibit jealousy, and so forth. That's why, even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most Americans still hang on to the nutty notions of heaven, hell, Adam and Eve, the Great Flood, and the Resurrection.

John Burgeson
Stratford, Conn.

The existential condition shared by human beings does predispose them to a belief in God. This predisposition, however, is not hard-wired into the human brain, as Paul Bloom's article seems to indicate, but instead emerges through linguistically mediated socialization. It is a product of the human software, so to speak, not the

hardware. The distinction is crucial for understanding how the concept of God evolved and why it is ubiquitous.

Notwithstanding the large percentage of persons who believe that their "selves" (or "souls") will exist eternally after death, very few claim that they physically or spiritually existed before their birth. The explanation is quite simple: self-consciousness does not antedate birth, nor does it develop in a vacuum. Rather, we come to know and conceive of ourselves as "selves" by acting out the various roles in the social matrix into which each of us is born.

Although the self-concept is highly abstract, we conceive of our selves not as an aggregation of subjective representations, attitudes, and memories but as ontologically real objects. When we say "I am" or "you are," we impute substantive, self-existent Being to the abstractions "I" and "you." We perform the same trick with the concept of God.

All human beings are at least dimly conscious of the collective intellectual matrix in which their consciousness floats, and which reflects the images of their individual selves back to them. Sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers have referred to this collectively generated intellectual process by various names: the generalized other, the collective consciousness, the collective unconscious, the divine mind, the infinite intellect, the oversoul, and (to use Freud's psychoanalytical metaphor) the internalized superego. The great religions objectify it by such names as God, Yahweh, Allah, and Brahman. Indeed, it was the collective intellectual process on which *Homo sapiens* embarked eons ago, when the species began using vocally uttered sounds to symbolize externally posited forms, that "created"—or, if one prefers, "evolved"—the verbal structure through which we perceive what we call the universe.

Thus the concept of God is not

something distinct from us. It is, rather, a reification of the community of consciousness that we have internalized as a part of us, that we share with other members of the human species, and that ultimately defines who we are. In Jesus' elegant phrase, the kingdom of God is within us. We sense this intuitively, although we quarrel interminably about the sanctity of our Lilliputian visions of the divine totem.

Thomas B. Pryor
Fort Smith, Ark.

Paul Bloom offers an interesting addition to the current literature on the phenomenon of religious faith, but his approach to the subject, like all others I have so far read, is to examine the faithful. Those of us without faith don't get much attention, perhaps because we are so few—little more than a few quotations from prominent figures about ways to reconcile belief and nonbelief.

From a scientific perspective, it might be worthwhile to ask why some lack not only faith but also any impetus toward spirituality of any kind. I grew up in a Christian home, where I went to Sunday school and church, to prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings, to vacation Bible school in the summer, and after about age fifteen to a week of "church camp" each summer. I enjoyed the fellowship and thought Bible study interesting, but it never occurred to me that the supernatural aspects of Christianity might be true. Perhaps it's similar to vaccination against common childhood illnesses—more than 95 percent of those vaccinated achieve some degree of immunity, but a few don't. We have learned something about our immune systems by studying those individuals in whom vaccination doesn't "take"; maybe a look at the few truly areligious among us would aid in understanding faith.

David Bacon
Denver, Colo.

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Paul Bloom's lucid account of the infantile origins of religious beliefs such as life after death prompts a question: How do we outgrow the religiously infantile and identify what might constitute "mature" belief? Bloom mentions in that regard Sam Harris's excellent book *The End of Faith*, which points up the cruelty and inconsistency of much Jewish, Christian, and Islamic dogma, favoring instead Buddhist meditation as the most effective way to calm our universal fears in the face of life's mystery and unfairness. Freud, taking his cue from Marx, interpreted belief as a cushion of rationalization softening the hard facts of death and fate. What Freud omitted, and what science in general omits in order to avoid any dilution of objectivity, is the flip side of fear: awe. Wonder may be the erotic counterforce Freud hoped would outweigh the mingled wish for and fear of death he found deep in the human psyche. One way past Freud's pessimism is to meditate on what science has taught us about the universe, its unfolding phases of creativity, its interconnectedness, and its coming to self-consciousness in our own capacity for awe. Irrational religious beliefs may be planted in us as "a by-product of biological adaptations gone awry," but we are free to evaluate such beliefs in the light of what we have glimpsed, say, through the Hubble telescope. Someone asked Thoreau on his deathbed if he believed in an afterlife. "One world at a time," he is said to have replied—a response that shows us what religious maturity might look like.

Winslow Myers
Stowe, Vt.

As a Christian academic, I didn't see Paul Bloom's article as a threat to my faith. But I was bothered by its lack of rigorous academic honesty. It read like a tract straight out of the Church of Evolution, penned by the high priests of Science.

Of course, to Bloom and his ilk, if it isn't quantifiable, it isn't true. And since science is in the business of quantifying and measuring, it naturally follows that if it isn't science, it isn't true.

G. K. Chesterton once said, "A madman is not someone who has lost his rea-

son. A madman is someone who has lost everything but his reason." In that sense, much of Bloom's argument was entirely reasonable.

Michael Bruner
Azusa Pacific University
Azusa, Calif.

Paul Bloom replies:

I appreciate the thoughtful remarks of John Burgeson and Thomas Pryor, but I disagree with them. Something can be universal or nearly universal without being the direct product of natural selection. Examples include back pain, visual after-effects, hiccups, masturbation, and self-pity. A propensity for supernatural belief might emerge in a similar way—as a by-product of certain traits, including social reasoning, that are themselves adaptations. And while elaborate religious systems are shaped by culture, the foundations of these systems—the seeds of religious thought—show up even in babies.

How, then, as David Bacon asks, can we explain the small minority of people who have no spiritual belief? Every human trait displays variation, in some cases because of genes and in others because of environment, and we could explore the cluster of personality factors that lead people toward skepticism. But one can also deny the premise of this question: while our individual conscious attitudes plainly differ, there is evidence that all of us hold some supernatural beliefs at a gut level. Bacon might explicitly reject the supernatural, but I would bet that he sees himself as somehow independent from his body and finds the notion of life after death to be, at least at an intuitive level, entirely sensible.

In this regard religion has an edge over science. On the other hand, as Winslow Myers nicely points out, scientific explanations have their own advantages. When you look at such accounts of the origin of the universe, the evolution of species, or the nature of matter, they are far more interesting—indeed, more beautiful—than the sorts of stories one finds in religious texts.

You don't have to be an atheist to be interested in why children believe in God. The study of why people have religious beliefs in no way challenges the truth of such beliefs. But some of these ideas, such as the view that human beings were created in their current form by a supernatural

being, are just mistaken, and deserve to be treated in the same way as the notion that the earth is flat.

This last point might be what upsets Michael Bruner, a self-described Christian academic. It is hard to tell, since instead of explaining his position he settles for accusing me of dishonesty and dogmatism. This does not seem very Christian, or very academic. But I did get a kick out of being called a high priest of Science.

College Admissions

The Atlantic's November College Admissions section completely ignores some of the more significant problems with the SAT and its use in the admissions process.

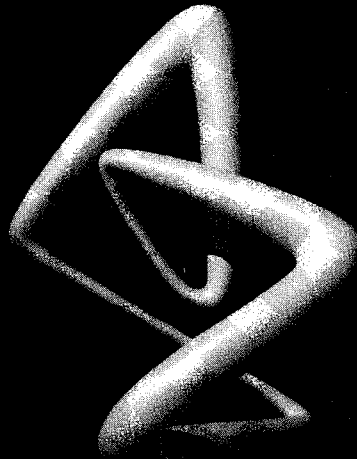
As a regional test-prep firm based in Chicago's North Shore suburbs, we have long been familiar with the advantage wealthier students have when preparing for the SAT and the ACT. Not only can they pay for courses and private tutoring, but we have recently seen a greater number of students be declared "learning disabled" and thus receive valuable extra time or other accommodations on standardized tests. Many other students are prescribed performance-enhancing drugs such as Ritalin and Adderall, ostensibly to treat ADHD and other disorders.

The result is a skewing of SAT scores in favor of students wealthy and savvy enough to take advantage of these opportunities. One needn't make judgments about the value of various accommodations to agree that poor students inevitably receive far fewer of them.

Jay Brody
Brody Admissions
Northbrook, Ill.

Ross Douhat ("Does the Meritocracy Work?," November *Atlantic*) offers damning statistics to show that kids who are admitted to the best colleges tend to come from wealthier-than-average families. However, these statistics ignore one critical point: families with college-age kids are by definition not average. For one thing, they are older than average by a considerable amount. The median income for all families in 2001 was about \$42,000 a year. But the median income for families headed by forty-five-to-fifty-

What Does This Stand For?



four-year-olds—those most likely to have college-age kids—was \$58,000.

I doubt this explains all the economic disparities Douthat complains of, but I suspect it explains a lot of them.

Dave Munger
Charlotte, N.C.

Ross Douthat's article was very interesting to me. I worked as a social worker for seven years for the state of Alabama and therefore had extensive contact with the poor. In order to work with them more effectively, I would send them for a psychological evaluation and IQ test. Their scores on the IQ tests were consistently low, around 75 to 80. This is the reason the poor are not attending college in large numbers. They do not have the intelligence (an IQ of 110 or higher) necessary to do college-level work.

My poor clients frequently told me they liked to work with their hands. They wanted good-paying factory jobs. We need to accept the lower quadrant in society with their limitations, and not outsource all the factory jobs overseas. All work is honorable. These people can contribute to society.

Seventy-five percent of the population has an IQ under 110. A Department of Education study shows twenty-nine out of every 100 students getting a degree, which is predictable if we consider how IQ limits who can do college-level work. I do not agree with Douthat's statement that IQ is not inherited. Studies of children who are adopted show that they have IQs within five points of their biological parents', regardless of their environment.

Colleges are not discriminating against lower-income people; nature has limited what they can do. Perhaps the intellectual elite should have more contact with the poor so that they can understand them better before they write articles about them.

Katherine Owen Sechrist
Mountain Brook, Ala.

I am in full agreement with Ross Douthat that higher education is not always about meritocracy. The barriers to college attendance and graduation for low-income students are immense and unreasonable, and too many insti-

tutions and individuals in higher education lose sight of social justice in the largely artificial rankings race. We need to get creative about admissions solutions, because higher education is and should be accessible to all students regardless of their ability to pay. The more higher education reproduces socioeconomic inequities, the more our society loses in terms of progressive thought, practice, and innovation.

However, Douthat's argument that graduates of elite or highly selective schools enjoy a lifetime of advantage completely discounts the fact that many of them work to reverse social and economic inequities in their postgraduate lives. Many have a "pay it forward" mentality that places a premium on using their education to change society in positive, more egalitarian ways. Students who have been raised with more resources than others often share this commitment with their families.

My fellow Stanford graduates (class of 1994), themselves from diverse economic backgrounds, are spread around the world, working to improve conditions among the impoverished and the disadvantaged on a global scale. Closer to home, they are in county hospitals, public schools, and philanthropic organizations. They are leading diversity initiatives in the workplace, mentoring young people who have few other sources of social support, and imbuing business with social consciousness. They are raising children with an emphasis on thinking outward, not inward. They are not fanning privilege.

Shannon Gilmartin
Los Angeles, Calif.

Ross Douthat replies:

Dave Munger makes a good point about how family income changes with parental age; ideally, studies of family income and college access would focus specifically on families with college-age students. I'm skeptical, however, that parental age explains "a lot" of the economic disparities. The child of a family earning the median income he cites, for instance, would have at least a 13 percent chance of earning a bachelor's degree by age twenty-four. A child from a family making more than \$90,000, on the other hand, has a 50 per-

cent chance of earning a B.A. over the same period.

I will not wade into the marshes of the IQ debate, but Katherine Owen Sechrist is no doubt right that many young Americans would be unlikely to succeed in college, or attend at all, even with a more level admissions playing field. The problem is that many low-income students who are prepared for college, and who score well on standardized tests, either don't go or enroll and then drop out after encountering economic and cultural hurdles. It's this population we should be concerned about, for the sake of both social mobility and America's long-term economic competitiveness.

And I only wish I could believe Shannon Gilmartin's appealing but unsupported assertion that more than a small percentage of young elites will spend their lives "working to improve conditions among the impoverished and the disadvantaged on a global scale."

BHL

I enjoyed Bernard-Henri Lévy's account of his visit with Norman Mailer in Provincetown ("In the Footsteps of Tocqueville," November *Atlantic*). His comments, however, do not reveal a close reading of Mailer's work. Lévy says that the hero of *Tough Guys Don't Dance* is gay. Tim Madden is straight, as is clearly revealed in several places in the novel, especially in the long opening conversation with his father. A more egregious error is Lévy's assertion that Mailer is "the most secular of American novelists." Even a cursory reading of *Advertisements for Myself*, *Of a Fire on the Moon*, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, or, most important, *The Gospel According to the Son* reveals Mailer's deep, idiosyncratic religiosity. For more than forty years he has written about his belief in a limited, imperfect God locked in a struggle with a powerful and wily Devil. Humanity is a third, often co-equal force, sometimes on the side of good and sometimes on that of evil. Mailer's well-considered theological beliefs are palpably obvious to his readers, who are many.

J. Michael Lennon
Wilkes University
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.



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Clark McCann (Letters to the Editor, November *Atlantic*) charges that Bernard-Henri Lévy “smears” the “intelligent design” advocate Jonathan Wells and his book *Icons of Evolution*. Forgive me for replying to another reader’s letter, but there’s always the chance someone might believe it to be accurate.

McCann begins by ridiculing the idea that Wells is part of “a Moonie conspiracy against evolution.” But read Wells’s own words, as quoted in the *Science* review of *Icons*: “Father’s [Moon’s] words, my studies, and my prayers convinced me that I should devote my life to destroying Darwinism, just as many of my fellow Unificationists had already devoted their lives to destroying Marxism. When Father chose me to enter a Ph.D. program in 1978, I welcomed the opportunity to prepare myself for battle.”

I would need more space than a letter allows to demolish every point Wells makes in his book, so I will offer only my favorite example of his poor scholarship and limited understanding of science—one from my own field, molecular phylogenetics. In *Icons*, Wells attempts to cast doubt on the ability of DNA and protein sequences to untangle the common ancestry of species. He picks what he thinks are obviously ridiculous results from the scientific literature, and among these is one that “puts cows closer to whales than to horses.” Now, anyone who has been following the subject lately knows that strong confirmation of this result has come from both molecular and fossil data. Not only are whales related to cows, but they are in fact close relatives of hippos, all in the group of even-toed ungulates, *Artiodactyla*. Horses are members of the odd-toed ungulates, *Perissodactyla*. To be fair, most of this confirmation came after Wells’s book was published. But it does handily refute his argument.

Wells’s book is scientifically useless. I am unaware of any textbook that was, or needed to be, corrected based on anything Wells wrote.

John Harshman
San Jose, Calif.

Who Indeed?

John Sellers’s “Who Will Win the Nobel Peace Prize?” (The Odds, November *Atlantic*) misidentified the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sri Sri Ravi Shankar as the sitar player Ravi Shankar. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is the founder of the Art of Living Foundation and the International Association for Human Values, both nonprofit NGOs affiliated with the UN. I’ve volunteered for various projects of these fine organizations.

Chris Smythe-Macaulay
Washington, D.C.

John Sellers replies:

Because the Nobel Foundation cannot, by its own statutes, release the names of nominees until fifty years after the fact, it is difficult to determine whether someone has been nominated or not. Any of the people or organizations that are eligible to nominate candidates may announce on their own whom they have nominated, but very few do so. There is plenty of documented speculation that Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was nominated, but no one, to my knowledge, has officially come out and said so. Meanwhile, it was also reported in the press that the sitarist Ravi Shankar was nominated. It is quite possible that both esteemed Shankars were nominated, or that neither was. We won't know for certain, however, until 2055. Which, of course, makes the Nobel Peace Prize all the more thrilling to bet on.

True or False?

Tyler Cabot omitted a critical piece of evidence in his discussion of Saint “Padre” Pio (“The Rocky Road to Sainthood,” November *Atlantic*). The Reverend Carlo Maccari, who alleged in a 1960 Vatican report that Padre Pio had had sexual relations with female penitents twice a week, later admitted that his accusations were false, and prayed to the falsely accused on his deathbed.

Paul Charles
Jacksonville, Fla.

Tyler Cabot replies:

The assertion that Maccari recanted on his deathbed has never been substantiated by objective sources. The claim seems to have originated in The Voice of Padre Pio, a



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Pio was an unusually controversial figure in life—as beleaguered by allegations of impropriety as he was revered for his supposed mystical powers. And as Paul Charles’s letter amply demonstrates, he remains a controversial figure in death.

Tongue Tied

I read with interest the article by Emily Bazelon (“What Would Zimbabwe Do?”) in the November *Atlantic*. I was, however, taken aback by her comment in the last paragraph, where she refers to laws that “limit free speech in Canada.” As a citizen of Canada, I am unaware that my free speech is limited, and I wonder whether Bazelon would care to elaborate. I would not like to continue to voice my opinions so openly if I am contravening legal statutes.

Sharon Coulter Nichol
Fairmont Hot Springs, B.C.

Emily Bazelon replies:

Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms treats as “fundamental” the rights to free speech and freedom of the press. But the charter makes these rights subject to “such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” In other words, Canadian free-speech rights have a built-in check. In some contexts the country’s courts have interpreted the charter to allow for more suppression of speech than American law permits. In 1990 Canada’s supreme court upheld a law barring hate speech. In 1992 the court adopted a relatively broad definition of obscenity, including material that exploits sex in a “degrading or dehumanizing” manner. And in 2002 a lower court outraged some civil libertarians by finding a man guilty of violating Saskatchewan’s Human Rights Code after he placed an advertisement in a local newspaper. The ad was for a bumper sticker. It cited (without quoting) biblical passages that condemn some homosexual acts and showed two male stick figures holding hands, standing in a circle with a slash through it.

Apologies Due

The December 2005 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* features a review of Yael Hedaya’s latest novel, *Accidents*. I was pleased to find in your publication a very thoughtful review of the work of this overlooked author. However, as the translator of the novel, I was disappointed to see that not only was my name not credited, but there was no mention at all that this novel is a translation. Neglecting to credit the translator, without whom most of your readers would not be able to read the book, is an unfortunate oversight that reflects a general lack of awareness of the art of literary translation. Literary translators invest a great deal of time and creative energy to expose English-speaking readers to works they would not otherwise have access to, and their efforts should be recognized.

Jessica Cohen
Seattle, Wash.

The Editors reply:

Our most sincere apologies to Jessica Cohen, who should certainly have been credited in the review. For lovers of literature and knowledge around the globe, she and her colleagues perform an invaluable service in the exercise of their art.

Advice & Consent

Regarding “Things Left Undone,” by Richard A. Clarke (November *Atlantic*): “Perfect” response to large-scale disasters is as improbable as a baseball team’s batting 1.000. And the “misses” are human tragedies. FEMA, as its name implies, is designed to “manage” an emergency, and it cannot be expected to protect every citizen against being hurt.

But can a crisis be prevented? In most cases, yes. The scenarios that unfolded after Katrina’s landfall were predictable and preventable, even if the storm itself was not.

First, flooding in New Orleans started well after Katrina had passed and could certainly have been averted. The floodwall design on the 17th Street Canal was an obvious weakness, and the possibility of its failure should at

least have been considered. Mitigation would have been as easy as installing relatively inexpensive floodgates at the entrances of each canal into Lake Pontchartrain or the Intracoastal Waterway. Once closed, they would have effectively prevented the backflow of the lake through a canal breach. The levee boards and the Army Corps of Engineers had plenty of money, but not enough foresight or commitment. A fatal mistake!

As for the evacuation, to say that it was botched is an understatement. The death toll would have been beyond imagination if the storm had moved thirty miles farther to the west and left in New Orleans the type of destruction that was found in Mississippi. No effective response to such a scenario is imaginable other than preventing it in the first place by executing a perfect evacuation.

A perfect evacuation would be difficult but not impossible. It would certainly be far easier to achieve than a “perfect response,” and far more effective than plucking hapless stragglers from rooftops with helicopters. Plans would have to be detailed down to the level of the individual citizen. Every citizen could be assigned a time to leave and a place to go after the evacuation is called. Rolling police barricades, emergency programming for traffic lights, and color-coded window stickers for cars could aid in traffic control. Before the start of hurricane season every citizen could be issued a “hurricane wristband” with bar-code information for identification and emergency-aid authorization. Activated by ZIP code when the evacuation is ordered, it could revolutionize the supply of goods to evacuees by outsourcing emergency assistance to selected partners like Wal-Mart and Target. Fraud, waste, and hassle would be eliminated. And nobody would be lost, since the bar-code readers would track people’s movements.

Can a city the size of New Orleans afford to go through an evacuation process like this each time it comes within the seventy-two-hour landfall probability cone of a hurricane? It cannot afford not to.

Rudi Schnur
Jarreau, La.



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THE GREATER GENERATION

IN DEFENSE
OF THE
BABY BOOM
LEGACY

LEONARD STEINHORN

"What Tom Brokaw did for the Greatest Generation, Leonard Steinhorn does for Baby Boomers.
It's about time someone did." —RICHARD SHENKMAN, author of *Presidential Ambition*

A BOOK this SIGNIFICANT comes along once a GENERATION

**“What Tom Brokaw did for the Greatest Generation,
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**“*The Greater Generation* is a timely, passionate defense
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Equality. Tolerance. Responsibility. The Greatest Generation gets credit for winning World War II and braving the Depression. But the Baby Boomers? All they get credit for is knowing how to order a tall skim double latte. Summoning the amazing sea changes they’ve made in American culture, this controversial book recasts the much-maligned Boomers as a Greater Generation with a lasting under-appreciated legacy.



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Diversity as a Moral Value: Boomers have led a culture war “to upend the rigid social structure of the Fifties and challenge centuries of entrenched norms and attitudes about race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality.”



The Greening of America: Under Boomers, environmental protection has become a powerful new norm in American society. No longer do we tolerate toxic run-offs and progress at any cost.



A Freer, More Open Society: Personal freedom, tolerance, openness, transparency, and equality—these are the values of the Baby Boom era, and we live them daily at home, work, school, and in our many relationships.

The media have it wrong: You don’t need to fight a war to be a great generation. America today is far more open, inclusive, and equal than at any time in our history, and Boomers are the foot soldiers who made it happen. *The Greater Generation* tells their remarkable story.

Leonard Steinhorn is a professor of communication at American University, where he teaches politics, media, and American culture. He has written for major media, including *The Washington Post*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*, and he appears frequently on broadcast news shows.



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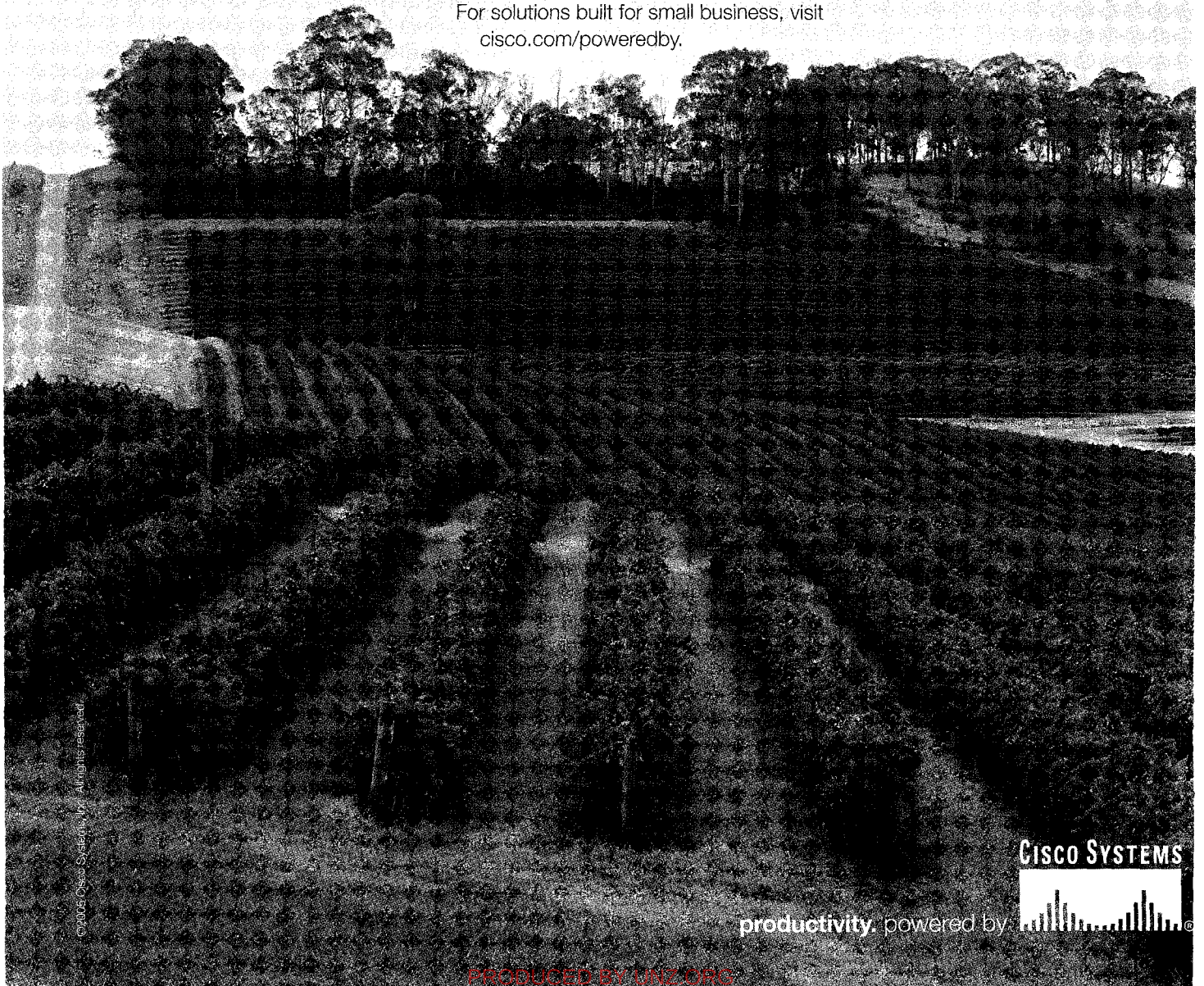
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THE AGENDA

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COMMENT

The Perils of Primacy

When too much power means not enough security

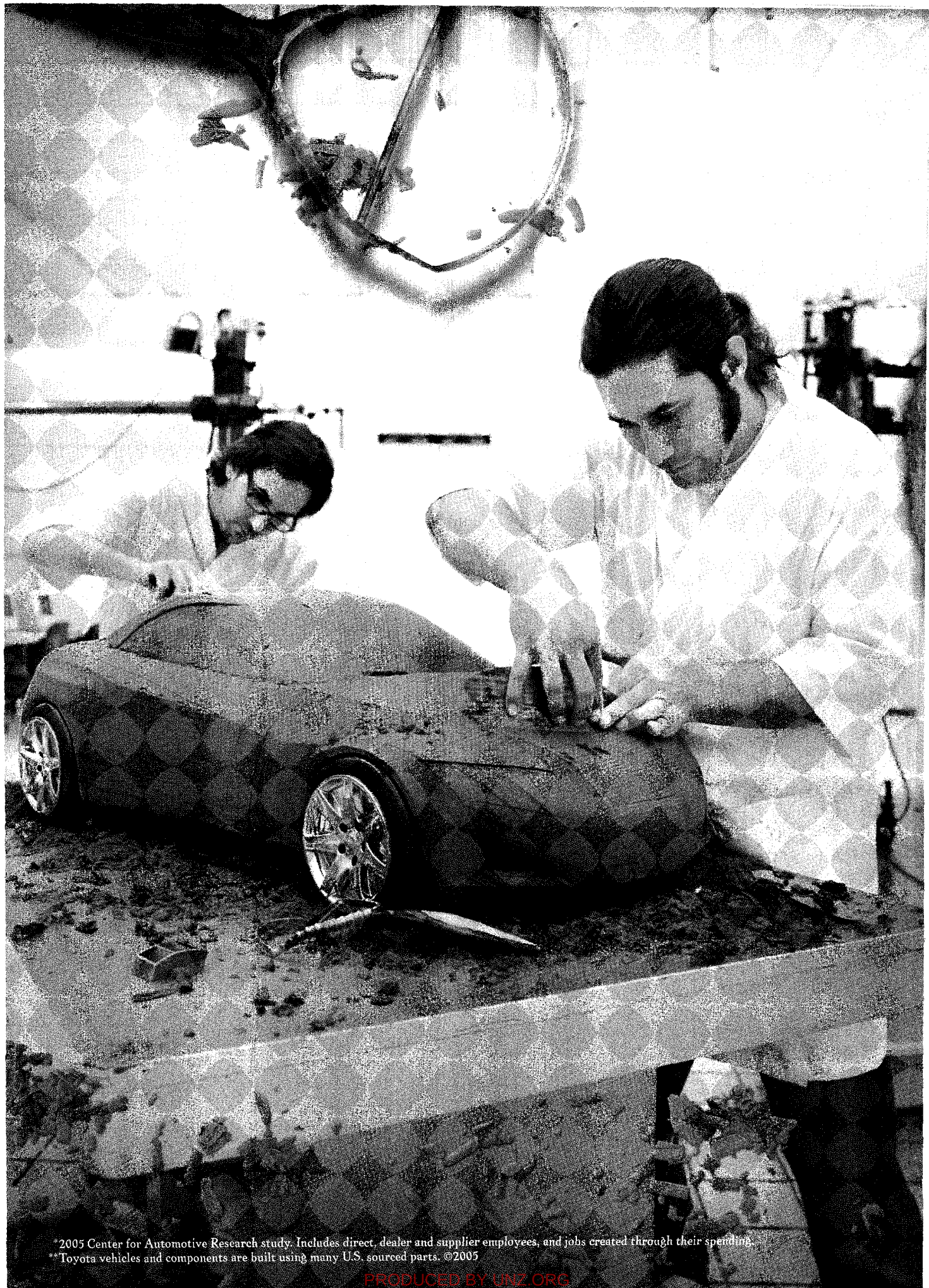
BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

In recent years special attention has been brought to bear on new and nontraditional dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction—notably, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by ever more countries, and the specter of nuclear terrorism. As William Langewiesche's article in this issue demonstrates, these are troubling developments, and the right way to deal with them is not at all clear.

But the news media and the nation's leaders have almost entirely ignored a startling and perilous development in the old sphere of nuclear confrontation, the one involving nuclear-armed major powers: the U.S. threat to the stability of deterrence. The past fifteen years have seen a profound and dangerous shift in the nuclear balance. For most of the Cold War the steadiness of superpower relations rested on the fact that both Moscow and Washington had nuclear retaliatory forces capable of surviving an enemy attack. Both knew that a nuclear war was unwinnable—an attack by one would surely produce a devastating riposte by the other. During this period both sides constantly and meticulously assessed the balance of terror and devoted enormous intellectual energy and sums of money to recalibrating it in response to even the slightest perceived alterations (a fact of which, as an analyst at the RAND Corporation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I was very much aware). The doctrine known as mutually assured destruction (MAD) entailed a continuous state of readiness, not to mention nervousness, but it bought decades of superpower peace.

Today, however, one country—the United States—appears to be on the verge of establishing true nuclear primacy. Ironically, America's nuclear dominance may dramatically diminish its security.

Defense analysts have grown increasingly nervous about the convergence of several strategic developments. In "The End of Mutual Assured Destruction?," a brilliant and sobering study of military analysis that is being prepared for publication in an academic journal, Keir A. Lieber, a scholar at Notre Dame, and Daryl G. Press, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a consultant to the Defense Department and to RAND, have trenchantly surveyed the trends that are troubling the experts. The first is the precipitous erosion of Russian nuclear capabilities. Compared with its forces in 1990, Moscow has 55 percent fewer intercontinental ballistic missiles,



*2005 Center for Automotive Research study. Includes direct, dealer and supplier employees, and jobs created through their spending.
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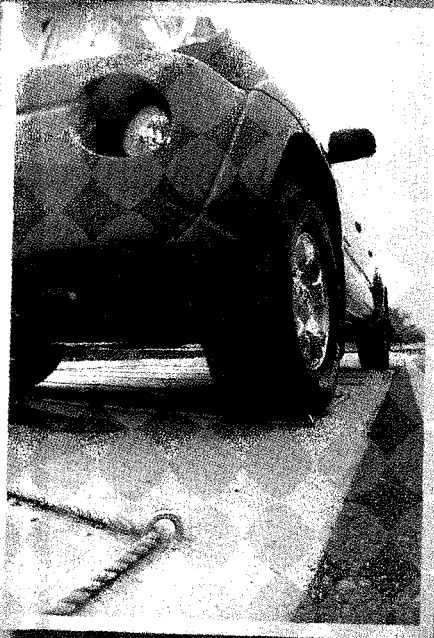
Design/88/88/88

Where we go when we go back to the drawing board.

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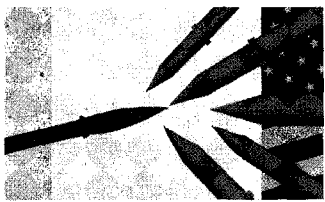
39 percent fewer strategic bombers, and 80 percent fewer ballistic-missile submarines, or SSBNs (the component of a nuclear arsenal most likely to survive a first strike). Moscow itself has stated that its nuclear forces will decline by an additional 35 percent in the coming years, but many experts believe the total Russian arsenal could shrink even more, from about 3,800 strategic warheads today to as few as 500 (the United States currently has more than 5,200). More important than this quantitative reduction, though, has been the even steeper qualitative decline. Owing to financial constraints, Russia can't ensure unbroken monitoring of American ICBM fields, and can't plug the holes in its missile-warning networks that render it blind to attacks from U.S. submarines in launch areas in the Pacific. Maintenance, supply, and training deficiencies afflict Russia's nuclear forces generally and its

sluggish pace of modernization in the nuclear forces of China, the country likeliest to emerge as the United States' most formidable "peer competitor" (to employ Pentagon-speak). Whatever Russia's vulnerabilities, China's are far more pronounced. Beijing has no operational SSBNs. Moscow's arsenal contains approximately 800 missiles that could reach the continental United States; Beijing's contains about eighteen. Most important, the military personnel devoted to China's nuclear forces have nothing like the training, experience, and institutional history of even Russia's—let alone America's, who have been training and preparing for nuclear war for well over half a century.

But whereas Russia's nuclear capabilities have decayed, and China's have remained largely static, America's have become far more lethal. Although the U.S. arsenal has diminished in size, it has also—reflecting

emptying a nuclear attack—and hence winning a nuclear war. Similarly, the avionics upgrades to the B-2 stealth bomber make sense only if that plane is to be directed against the most technologically sophisticated peer competitor, not against a "rogue state" such as Iran or North Korea. Washington's intentions can't, of course, be definitely determined, but as a RAND report on the future roles of the U.S. nuclear arsenal concluded in 2003, "What the planned force appears best suited to provide beyond the needs of traditional deterrence is a *preemptive counterforce capability against Russia and China*. Otherwise, the numbers and the operating procedures simply do not add up" (emphasis in original).

In a feat of technical sophistication and strategic insight, Lieber and Press have modeled a U.S. first strike against Russia. (Although China is Washington's most probable great-power rival, the authors argue, Rus-



Until a stable nuclear stalemate with the United States is restored, Moscow and Beijing will surely buy deterrence by decentralizing their command-and-control systems and implementing "launch on warning" policies.

submarines most crucially. A viable Russian deterrent demands that a number of SSBNs be at sea at any given time and that they successfully evade the U.S. attack submarines that stalk them. But in fact most Russian SSBNs must now remain pier-side—the Russians weren't able to conduct any patrols in 2002 and could carry out only two in 2004. This makes the SSBNs highly vulnerable to a U.S. first strike, and it means that the skills Russian SSBN crews need in order to elude U.S. subs have been greatly vitiated (most Russian crews haven't been on patrol in years). Largely for these reasons former commanders of Russia's ballistic-missile fleet warned as long ago as 1998 that their supposedly invulnerable submarines would be detected and destroyed in a conflict with the United States.

Equally noteworthy has been the

the seemingly exponential progress of the U.S. military's technological revolution—grown both immensely more accurate and immensely more powerful. The Navy, for instance, has refitted its entire SSBN fleet to carry the new, highly accurate Trident II, a missile whose already stunning precision has been nearly continuously upgraded. The Navy has also deployed 400 W88 warheads, which are nearly five times as powerful as the Trident II's Cold War-era warhead. Minuteman III ICBMs have been retrofitted with much more accurate guidance systems and higher-yield warheads.

These improvements are inconsistent with the aim of simply deterring an adversary's nuclear attack—a goal that would require merely a "countervalue" strike on the enemy's cities. They *are* necessary for a disarming "counterforce" strike, aimed at pre-

sia presents a "hard case" for their contention that America has achieved nuclear ascendancy.) That model, which they presented at the Council on Foreign Relations in October, has been vetted by most of the top civilian defense analysts. To be conservative, it assumes that U.S. nuclear weapons will perform with much less accuracy and reliability than should be expected. Even so, the authors conclude, a U.S. attack today would destroy the entire Russian nuclear arsenal. To grossly oversimplify: the erosion of Russian capabilities, combined with new, overwhelming warhead yields and the "accuracy revolution" in U.S. nuclear forces, has largely obviated the problems of "fratricide" (the prospect that U.S. missiles on the attack would destroy each other, leaving their targets safe) that once helped make a disarming strike impossible to achieve.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN RITTER

Lieber and Press emphasize that their analysis doesn't prove that a U.S. first strike would succeed, but it highlights a development that is grave if only because it's one that prudent planners in Russia and China, who conduct similar analyses, are no doubt already surmising: that their countries can no longer be confident of having a viable deterrent. Surely adding to their alarm is the realization that the nuclear imbalance, troubling enough already, will only grow in the coming years. Washington's withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and its concomitant pursuit of a national missile-defense system will greatly enhance its offensive nuclear capabilities, because although critics of missile defense correctly argue that it could never shield America from a massive full-scale nuclear attack, it could quite plausibly deal with the very few missiles an adversary might have left to deploy after a U.S. first strike. What's more, the United States is actively pursuing a series of initiatives—including further advances in anti-submarine and anti-satellite warfare; in missile accuracy and potency; and in wide-area remote sensing, aimed at finding "relocatable" targets such as mobile ICBMs—that will render Russia's and China's nuclear forces all the more vulnerable.

To be sure, America's emerging nuclear hegemony could bring benefits, including potential leverage vis-à-vis our superpower counterparts in such areas of competition as the Balkans and Taiwan. It will also force China to divert defense resources from its power-projection efforts in East Asia. (This, however, would be both a blessing and a curse: "We should expect a new, prolonged, and intense nuclear arms race," Lieber and Press conclude.) But whether or not America has deliberately pursued the ability to win a nuclear conflict, that capability will increase the risk of great-power war. U.S.-Chinese relations are bound to be edgy or worse for the foreseeable future, and although relations between Washington and Moscow are nowhere near their Cold War nadir, actual and

potential strains remain formidable. Each country has nuclear-armed missiles that can be delivered against the other within minutes—and in America's nuclear-war plans the overwhelming number of targets remain inside Russia. Most important, any shift in the nuclear balance itself will engender a volatility that could cause seemingly small conflicts between countries to quickly spiral.

Confronted with the growing nuclear imbalance, Russia and China will be forced to try to redress it; but given America's advantages, that effort, as Lieber and Press note, could take well over a decade. Until a nuclear stalemate is restored—if it ever is—Moscow and Beijing will surely buy deterrence by spreading out their nuclear forces, decentralizing their command-and-control systems, and implementing "launch on warning" policies. If more than half a century of analyzing nuclear dangers and "crisis stability" has taught us anything, it is that all these steps can cause crises to escalate uncontrollably. They could trigger the unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons; this could lead to inadvertent nuclear war.

American military preponderance now embraces the entire "spectrum of conflict," as Pentagon planners put it. That is to say, we're miles ahead of everyone in every type of warfare. But if that preponderance is leading to a world in which Russian and Chinese launch commanders are fingering nuclear hair triggers, the game may not be worth the candle. Without any public scrutiny or debate the United States has emerged as the nuclear hegemon, in possession of a destabilizing first-strike capability. It does not matter whether this has come about by accident or design, or whether America's motives are worthy or malign; the condition itself is the problem. The ramifications of this state of affairs are of the gravest significance to America's security—and the world's. It's time for scrutiny and debate to begin. ■

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.

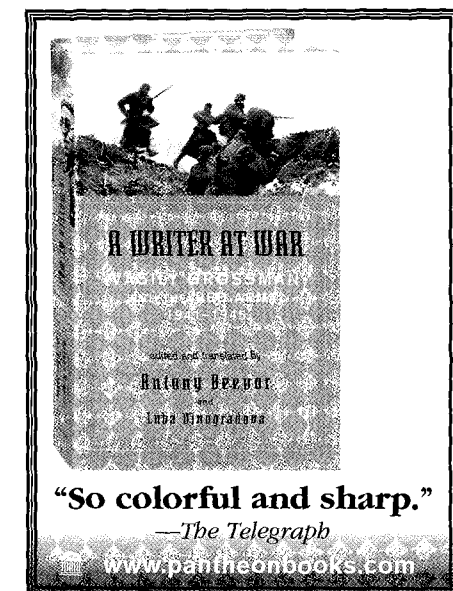
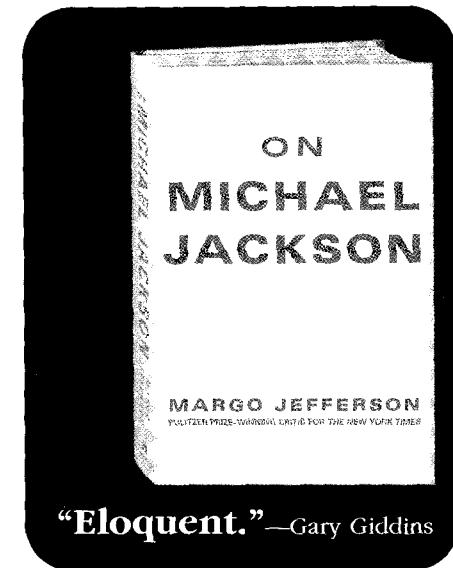
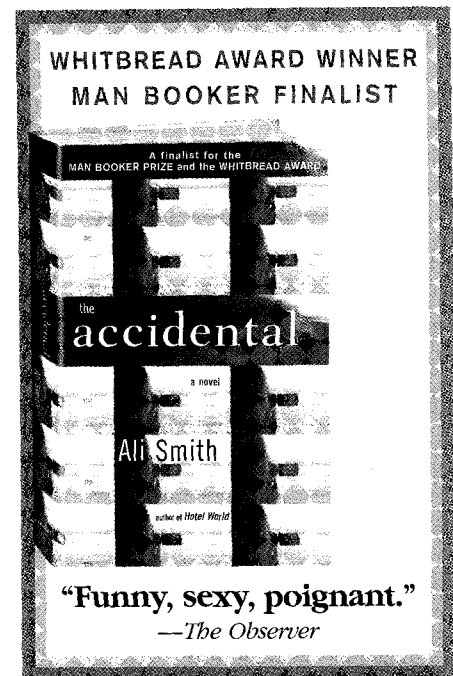


PHOTO OP

SECTS IN THE CITÉ

Two young Muslim rappers pose against a backdrop of one of the high-rise housing projects, or cités, that ring central Paris. France was thrown into social and political convulsions nationwide late last fall when Muslims in such impoverished projects, mostly young and mostly jobless, rioted night after night for three weeks, torching cars by the thousands. As much as ten percent of the French population is made up of Muslim immigrants and their children—the highest proportion in Europe.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDRA BOULAT / VII



Company, Left

There's something different about the latest crop of military veterans running for Congress

BY JOSHUA GREEN

Command Sergeant Major Tim Walz is a twenty-four-year veteran of the Army National Guard, now retired but still on active duty when a visit from President George W. Bush shortly before the 2004 election coincided with Walz's homecoming to Mankato, Minnesota. A high school teacher and football coach, he had left to serve overseas in Operation Enduring Freedom. Southern Minnesota is home to a large Guard contingent that includes Walz's unit, the First 125th Field Artillery Battalion, so the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are naturally a pressing local concern—particularly to high school students headed into the armed services.

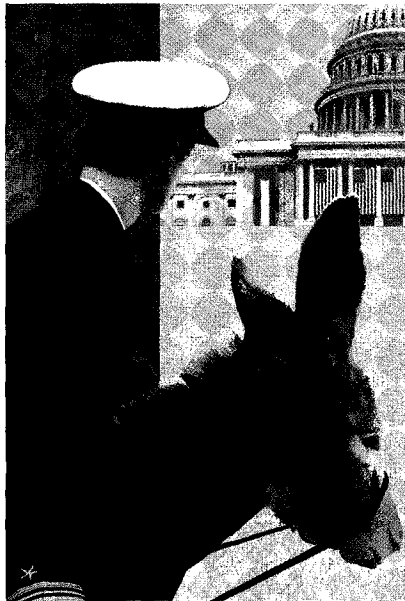
The president's visit struck Walz as a teachable moment, and he and two students boarded a Bush campaign bus that took them to a quarry where the president was to speak. But after they had passed through a metal detector and their tickets and IDs were checked, they were denied admittance and ordered back onto the bus. One of the boys had a John Kerry sticker on his wallet.

Indignant, Walz refused. "As a soldier, I told them I had a right to see my commander-in-chief," the normally jovial forty-one-year-old recently explained to a Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party dinner in the small town of Albert Lea, Minnesota.

His challenge prompted a KGB-style interrogation that was sadly characteristic of Bush campaign events. Do you support the president? Walz refused to answer. Do you oppose the president? Walz replied that it was no one's business but his own. (He later learned that his wife was informed that the Secret Service might arrest him.) Walz thought for a moment and asked the Bush staffers if they really wanted to arrest a command sergeant major who'd just returned from fighting the war on terrorism.

They did not.

Instead Walz was told to behave himself and permitted to attend the speech, albeit under heavy scrutiny. His students were not: they were sent home. Shortly after this Walz retired from the Guard. Then he did something that until recently was highly unusual for a military man. He announced he was running for Congress—as a Democrat.



Walz personifies two of this year's most interesting political trends, both of which appear to emanate from the country's growing dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq and the party most responsible for it. The midterm elections this fall will be the first in which a sizable number of veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq run for Congress. At least fourteen have declared so far. But in an era when military and national-security issues have long been the province of the Republican Party—indeed, are thought to have strengthened the GOP's grip on the White House and Congress in the past two elections—the bigger surprise is under whose banner these veterans are choosing to run. Like Walz, nearly every one of them is a Democrat.

One reason for the surge of Democratic veterans on the campaign trail is the example of Paul Hackett, a forty-three-year-old major in the Marine Corps who returned from Iraq and became the Democratic candidate in a special election last August for Ohio's second-district congressional seat. In a staunchly conservative district Hackett campaigned as an unabashed critic of the Bush administration and its handling of the Iraq War at a time when few elected Democrats were so bold, and he fell just a few thousand votes short of an upset victory. He became a media star in the process, and is now running to unseat Ohio's embattled senior senator, the Republican Mike DeWine, this fall.

The subsequent group of veterans very much resembles Hackett: they are generally young (most in their thirties and forties), new to electoral politics, and, with varying degrees of intensity, critics of the administration. At a time when the public's opinion of lawmakers in both parties is abysmal, these veterans are running on the attractively civic-minded notion that service in Congress is a patriotic extension of service in the military. They are spread throughout the country but concentrated in military-heavy states like Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, and Texas, where the war and its effects are most keenly felt.

This fact was driven home on the day I arrived in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to meet Marine Lieutenant Colonel Tim Dunn, a lawyer and a veteran of the Gulf War and the Kosovo conflict. Dunn recently returned from a tour in Iraq, where he helped the Iraqi Special Tribunal investigate and prosecute former high officials of the regime, including Saddam Hussein himself. He is a Democratic candidate for the state's eighth congressional district, home to the Army's Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base. Just before we were to meet, Dunn was called away to attend a tragically familiar ritual around Fayetteville: a memorial service for an Army Special Forces soldier killed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan.

When we did meet, the next day, Dunn described local concerns that echoed what I'd already heard around town and also in Minnesota and Texas

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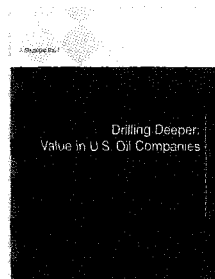
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districts with high concentrations of military personnel—concerns about families left behind and about health care and economic assistance for returning veterans. Above all there was a diffuse and mounting frustration with Washington, most often summed up in military idiom as a “crisis of leadership.”

“I pledge to be someone who will not only vote his convictions but voice his convictions,” Dunn said. With his wrap-around sunglasses and hair cut high and tight, he looked as if he had just hopped off a tank. “What’s needed in Congress today is a dose of honor, courage, and commitment.” This same sentiment is voiced, though possibly for different reasons, by the lone Republican veteran seeking a House seat: Van Taylor, a thirty-three-year-old Marine captain who is hoping to oust the incumbent Democrat in Texas’s seventeenth district. “People want a congressman who’s a proven leader in the war on terror,” Taylor says.

That sort of raw authenticity—experience in combat—has declined steadily over the past three decades. According to research conducted by William Bianco, a professor at Penn State University who has studied the civilian-military divide, the number of veterans in the House reached its zenith in 1971, when more than 72 percent of congressmen had served. With the retirement of World War II veterans and the underrepresentation of veterans of later wars, that number has slipped below 20 percent. Experts attribute this decline to the paucity of large-scale combat operations, the shrinking of the armed services overall, and the change in 1975 to an all-volunteer military, which created a higher percentage of career-minded soldiers, less likely to take an interest in running for office. That could change. “What you’re looking at now is fairly unusual,” says Richard Kohn, a history professor and the chair of the Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense at the University of North Carolina. “This is the first time post-1975 that you’re seeing a group emerge that specifically wants to get involved in politics.”

Every significant war produces a generation of politicians, and each generation reflects the war that forged

it. Bill Clinton, a consummate student of politics, used to joke to his White House staff, with no small bit of truth, that “if you were a Civil War general from Ohio in the late nineteenth century, you stood a fifty percent chance of becoming president.” World War II yielded a bountiful crop of politicians, including seven presidents (Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, and George H.W. Bush) and dozens of congressmen; ninety-two veterans were elected to the first Congress after the war’s end. In contrast, seven years after the United States left Vietnam, only four Vietnam veterans were in Congress. Even these few, though, have made their presence felt: the first to be elected was John Murtha, the Pennsylvania Democrat who set off a storm in November when he called on the Bush administration to withdraw troops from Iraq.

What sort of impact might Iraq War veterans have on Congress? Raw numbers aside, it stands to reason that veterans of unpopular wars like Vietnam and Iraq can have a greater immediate effect in Washington than those of popular wars like World War II. Although veterans of any war tend to be held in high esteem, only wars that voters perceive the United States to be losing awaken the type of anti-Washington sentiment that is suddenly so widespread.

And yet that did little to put Vietnam veterans in office three decades ago. What’s different about this war is how veterans perceive, and in turn are perceived by, the Democratic Party. The antiwar movement during Vietnam (and by extension the Democratic Party) was heavily anti-GI as well. But even the most strident antiwar faction of today’s party is unquestionably pro-soldier. “An Iraq veteran doesn’t carry the baggage that a Vietnam veteran carried in liberal circles,” says Charles Moskos, a sociologist specializing in military issues. Judging by the willingness of today’s veterans to run as Democrats, the feeling is mutual.

Rightly or wrongly, the current crop of veterans seems to be inoculated against the standard criticism of Democrats as weak on national security. And most of the voters I encountered

appeared to look at service in Iraq or Afghanistan as not just a desirable credential but one that confers unchallengeable moral standing—no small thing at a time when ethical transgressions promise to be central to the fall elections.

It seems too neat to be mere coincidence—though it must be—that a few of the current Democratic veterans are pitted against some notorious Republican grotesques. In Pennsylvania’s tenth district Don Sherwood, a sixty-four-year-old married Republican incumbent, made headlines last year for allegedly beating his twenty-nine-year-old mistress. (The case was settled.) He faces a challenge from Chris Carney, a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserves who at the time was coordinating counterintelligence activities in the Middle East. In North Carolina, Tim Dunn is running against the incumbent Republican Robin Hayes, who managed the considerable feat of making John Kerry look Churchillian when he publicly vowed to vote against the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which would hurt the district’s manufacturing sector, and then knuckled under to last-minute pressure from the administration. The most arresting example of a heroic veteran could be a Democratic candidate for the race in Illinois’s sixth district, Tammy Duckworth, a Blackhawk helicopter pilot in the Iraq War who lost both legs and shattered an arm when she was shot down.

Of course, veterans are no more immune than anyone else from the quotidian demands of a congressional challenge. Given their straitlaced demeanor and the service-and-sacrifice nature of their career, the ones I met seemed particularly ill at ease asking for money. Still, they have cause for hope. In the final hour Paul Hackett’s Ohio campaign caught fire as Democrats across the country learned of his campaign and, with the aide of activist blogs and Web sites, pumped in nearly half a million dollars. The ability of his successors to repeat that performance will go a long way toward determining if this latest charge of candidate veterans is a skirmish or the first wave on the beach. ▀

Joshua Green is a senior editor of The Atlantic.

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Man Versus Mine

Iraqi insurgents have perfected the use of lethal explosives, with profound implications for our military operations in Iraq

BY ROBERT BRYCE

Nearly a century ago, while serving as a British liaison officer to the Arab tribes during World War I, T. E. Lawrence developed many of the techniques of modern insurgent warfare. Lawrence's fluency in Arabic and profound understanding of Arab culture helped him invigorate the Arab Revolt of 1916–1918. His savvy military tactics helped ensure its success against the Turks.

In his memoir, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922), Lawrence revealed his most effective tactic: "Mines were the best weapon yet discovered to make the regular working of their trains costly and uncertain for our Turkish enemy." If not for Lawrence's pioneering use of precisely placed explosives, the Arab Revolt might well have failed.

In Iraq the insurgents are using similar weapons against U.S. forces. Today they are called IEDs—for "improvised explosive devices"—rather than mines, and the insurgents are targeting automobiles rather than trains. But the effect is just as devastating.

The number of mines being used in Iraq, and the share of casualties for which they are responsible, dwarf anything ever before seen by the American military. During World War II three percent of U.S. combat deaths were caused by mines or booby traps. In Korea that figure was four percent. By 1967, during the Vietnam War, it was nine percent, and the Pentagon began experimenting with armored boots. From June to November of 2005, IEDs were responsible for 65 percent of American combat deaths and roughly half of all nonfatal injuries.

Mines, quite naturally, have evolved since Lawrence's day. Iraqi insurgents are armed with a surfeit of explosives and ordnance, ranging from TNT to artillery shells. In addition, they may be making bombs from some of the 380

tons of high explosives that vanished from an Iraqi bunker after the American invasion in March of 2003. The missing arsenal includes truckloads of HMX and RDX, military-grade explosives so powerful that they were monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency before the war. Detonation techniques are myriad. The insurgents have used pressure switches, infrared beams, cell phones, garage-door openers, and even garden hoses (which when run over by a vehicle send a stream of water into a small bottle, activating a detonator).

The combination of highly juiced explosives and ingenious detonation technologies has opened up unending possibilities for low-risk offensives by the insurgency. Small but devastatingly lethal bombs can be disguised as cinder blocks, hidden inside dead animals, covered with roadside trash heaps, placed underneath bridges—in short, can lurk almost anywhere in Mesopotamia.

The Pentagon's counter-IED strategy is coordinated by the Joint IED Defeat Task Force, which was originally set up under the Army's jurisdiction in 2003. Until last month Joseph Votel, a one-star Army general, led the effort, but the Pentagon recently assigned command to a retired four-star general—a move Votel says he supports. The task force works with about eighty different contractors on roughly a hundred counter-IED initiatives. Last year the Department of Defense spent about \$1.2 billion on those and other counter-IED efforts. This year it will spend about \$3.5 billion. That sum does not include money spent adding armor to vehicles.

About two thirds of the 22,000 Humvees in Iraq now have some type of armor, and in November the Senate appropriated \$344.3 million to add more steel to the Hummer fleet. Electronic jammers are being used to thwart IEDs detonated by radio. One of the newest counter-IED technologies is known as the Buffalo—a twenty-seven-foot mine-destroying vehicle with solid rubber tires and a remote-operated steel arm. It weighs more than fourteen Toyota Camrys and gets about four miles per gallon.

Votel told me recently that some of the countermeasures have been effective, and that the number of casualties caused by each IED has declined. But he concedes that the overall casualty rate is still climbing, and that the insurgents are changing their tactics. "This is a very, very adaptive enemy," he says.

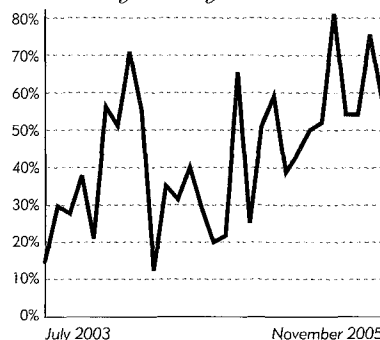
"We clearly recognize that there's a very difficult road ahead of us."

The insurgents have responded to heavier armor by building larger and more sophisticated mines. Last August fourteen Marines were killed near Haditha, in western Iraq, when their

moderately armored amphibious-assault vehicle was hit by an IED fashioned from three land mines. The Iraqis have also begun using shaped charges that fire armor-piercing conical projectiles. As jammers proliferate, cell-phone detonators are being replaced by pressure switches and other techniques. And as bomb makers share their knowledge by circulating videos and other instructional materials, more IEDs of all types are being planted and detonated. Many military analysts and active-duty soldiers doubt that the threat posed by IEDs can be neutralized anytime soon.

The growing use of IEDs is forcing America's military strategists to rethink centuries of military doctrine holding that in warfare, mobility equals dominance. Votel told me that

Percentage of combat deaths in Iraq caused by IEDs, by month



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INVASION OF THE PRIVACY SNATCHERS

The protection of privacy, at least for the rich and famous, gets a boost this year under a new California law that permits hefty civil damages to be awarded to those injured by overzealous paparazzi. The measure was prompted in part by a series of high-profile dustups: one photographer allegedly assaulted several people, including two children, while trying to obtain photos of a birthday outing for Reese Witherspoon's daughter; another was arrested for allegedly ramming his minivan into Lindsay Lohan's Mercedes in order to film her distress. Many high—or should we say low?—points of brazenness among the paparazzi are documented in Peter Howe's recent book *Paparazzi* (Artisan). Herewith some selections. —MATTHEW QUIRK

1. The Term Is Coined. Buzzing around the Via Veneto on a scooter in the 1950s and 1960s, Tazio Secchiaroli was the original Paparazzo, the model for the character by that name in Federico Fellini's 1960 film *La Dolce Vita*. After exploding a flashbulb in Ava Gardner's face and drawing the ire of her consort, Walter Chiari, in an incident captured through the lenses of accomplices, Secchiaroli discovered that engineering conflict with a star could bring him sixty times his usual fee.

2. O's Eyes. With a persistence bordering on obsession, Ron Galella trailed Jackie Onassis from 1968 to 1982. His most famous shot, taken in 1971, shows her on a Manhattan street, smiling slightly, hair blown across her face and sunglasses in hand—one of the few times she was caught with her eyes unshielded. Onassis obtained a restraining order against Galella in 1973. He flouted it repeatedly until, brought back to court nine years later, he agreed never to photograph her again.

3. The Rest of Her. By posing as a gardener, Settimio Garritano gained access to Skorpios, Aristotle Onassis's private island, where he used a telephoto lens to get close-ups of Jackie sunbathing in the nude. The photos were sold to Larry Flynt for a 1975 issue of *Hustler*.

4. Pursuing the Pontiff. Adriano Bartoloni spent seven months early in John Paul II's tenure attempting to photograph the pope at his summer residence, outside Rome. Having cased the property by



air, Bartoloni exploited a brief window between regular security patrols to climb into a ditch. He set up a shelter, hid a remote-controlled camera in a tree, and hunkered down for eleven days. He got the shot he was after: John Paul swimming in his pool.

5. The First of the Chopperazzi.

After sifting through Madonna's trash for weeks in 1985, Phil Ramey and his colleagues discovered the secret location of her upcoming wedding to Sean Penn—atop a cliff in Malibu—and positioned themselves in a rented house next door. They were discovered and evicted at the last minute, but a hastily chartered helicopter allowed Ramey to capture the nuptials anyway, along with a message to the paparazzi scrawled in giant letters on the beach: "Fuck Off."

6. Fergie's Toes. In 1992 poolside photos ran of Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, having her toes kissed or sucked by her financial adviser; the photographer, Jean-Paul Dousset, had received an indirect tip from a car-rental agent. The ease with which Dousset got the shots—the pool, in Saint-Tropez, was visible from the road—convinced him that Fergie, who had recently separated from Prince Andrew, had been set up by Buckingham Palace in an attempt to expose the liaison. This theory was never proved, but the photos were "bought out" by persons unknown to prevent their further publication.

7. Di's Death. Princess Diana's relationship with the wealthy Egyptian Dodi al-Fayed attracted a swarm of paparazzi, whose high-speed pursuit was initially blamed for her death in a car accident in a Paris tunnel in 1997. An investigation later revealed that her driver had three times the legal level of alcohol in his blood. Still, the episode provoked a widespread backlash against paparazzi, and images of the dying princess went unpublished for several years.

given the success that IEDs have had against America's fleet of motor vehicles, the Pentagon may need to switch to more foot patrols. An intelligence analyst working on the IED problem agreed, saying, "The answer to the IEDs is to leave the vehicles. It's obvious. It's the only choice." But such a move would expose U.S. soldiers to other risks, including snipers. And the December detonation of an IED in Fallujah, killing ten Marines on foot patrol, shows that soldiers will remain vulnerable to IEDs whether on foot or behind the wheel. As long as the insurgents can use IEDs to inflict damage on U.S. soldiers without ever engaging them directly, they will have a tactical advantage. "Our whole military is based on the idea of overwhelming firepower put on targets," says William S. Lind, a noted military theorist who has written extensively on asymmetric warfare. "But that doesn't work in this type of conflict. We are fighting an enemy that has made himself untargetable." Therefore, Lind says, the insurgents can continue fighting the American military in Iraq indefinitely—regardless of how many U.S. troops are deployed or how quickly they are massed.

IEDs also create fear and uncertainty—sensations that Lawrence exploited in fighting the Turks. In *Seven Pillars* he wrote that after his initial success at planting mines, the technique was quickly adopted by his fellow warriors. Over a period of four months his bomb makers destroyed seventeen locomotives, after which "traveling became an uncertain terror for the enemy."

Fear and uncertainty, of course, ultimately breed mistrust. That may be the most damaging aspect of the IEDs: they prey on American minds, making soldiers suspicious of the local population and ultimately isolating them.

For Lind and other military theorists, the IED problem in Iraq is insoluble no matter how much time or money is spent. "If we can't engage the enemy," he says, "what do we do? The answer is, we lose." ■

Robert Bryce is the author of Pipe Dreams: Greed, Ego, and the Death of Enron and Cronies: Oil, the Bushes, and the Rise of Texas, America's Superstate.



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Whose Court Is It Really?

John Roberts is the new chief justice, but the Supreme Court isn't his to lead just yet

BY BENJAMIN WITTES

What are the early indications of what the Roberts Court will be like?

It's not the Roberts Court—at least not yet. It's still the Stevens Court.

Excuse me?

For a few weeks this past summer, between the death of Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and the confirmation of John G. Roberts Jr. as his successor, John Paul Stevens was the acting chief justice. During those weeks nothing of consequence happened. But the brief accession of the eighty-five-year-old Stevens crystallized what has been obvious for some time: perhaps the Court's left-most justice, he has over the past half decade become its key behind-the-scenes leader. And until I see evidence that Chief Justice Roberts has effected a coup, it will remain the Stevens Court in my book.

What on earth are you talking about? Isn't this Supreme Court a conservative body?

Sure, sure. In some sense the Court is a conservative body. It's not aggressively creating liberal social policy much anymore. And in some areas—the power of states relative to the federal government, for example—it flirts with an aggressively conservative approach.

But consider: In the past few years alone the Court has upheld affirmative action at the University of Michigan Law School, struck down state laws banning partial-birth abortion, upheld the sweeping new McCain-Feingold campaign-finance-reform law, affirmed federal power to prohibit the medical use of marijuana, and struck down the death penalty for the mentally retarded and for those who committed their crimes as juveniles. It has

dealt two body blows to the so-called property-rights movement—last term holding that localities could seize private property for economic-development purposes if they paid appropriate compensation, and a few years ago rejecting an attack on the power of state governments to restrict development around Lake Tahoe. It has curtailed its earlier experiment with carving out broad immunity for state governments from lawsuits seeking money damages. It has asserted jurisdiction over military detentions at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, in Cuba. And it has entirely rewritten federal law relating to criminal sentencing, requiring that juries, not judges, make the key factual findings that determine how much prison time a convict may receive.

In every one of these cases Rehnquist was in dissent and Stevens was in the majority, which means that he—as the longest-serving justice on the winning side—decided who wrote the opinion. In quite a few of these cases he did so himself. There is simply no comparably important body of law made by the Court in the past half decade for which Rehnquist led the majority.

Isn't this just because the Court's key swing votes, Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy, have recently swung Stevens's way, not Rehnquist's?

To a certain extent, yes. In some cases, such as the death-penalty decisions, Stevens depended on at least one of the swing voters for his majority. But Stevens has many more ways to count to five (the essential task of winning majorities on a nine-member Court) than Rehnquist did or Roberts does. The four liberals form a more cohesive bloc than the five conservatives do, so Stevens generally needs

to win only one justice to get his way. Kennedy and O'Connor are often the easiest targets, but from time to time he has shown himself adept at making common cause with the Court's most conservative justices, too. For example, in the key sentencing cases Stevens's majority included both Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas—along with the liberals Ruth Bader Ginsburg and David Souter. And he makes allies of conservatives in losing battles as well—for instance, in the case of Yaser Esam Hamdi, whom the Bush administration was holding without trial as an enemy combatant, he signed on to a Scalia dissent that was the most uncompromising rejection of the administration's position in the case.

For this supposedly conservative Court to actually produce conservative results, in short, everything has to work perfectly for the conservatives—and that happens a lot less often than one might expect.

But how much of this can be traced directly to Stevens's influence?

That's hard to say. Stevens may not be the justice who's actually assembling these majorities—if, indeed, any justice is assembling them. The justices are highly independent actors, and he may just be getting lucky—that is, finding himself with the votes that entitle him to assign key opinions. If any liberal justice is out working his colleagues to assemble a functioning coalition, it's probably Stephen Breyer, who has labored over the years to develop a common constitutional language with O'Connor and to detach her from the conservatives to some degree.

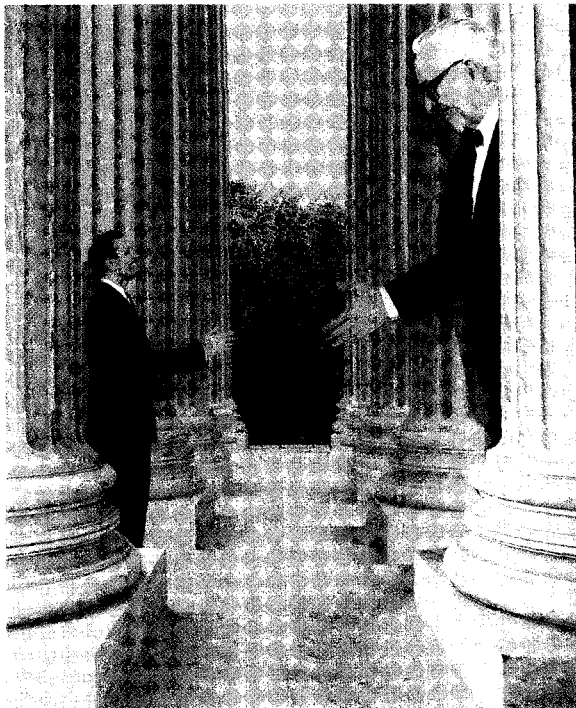
Still, certain aspects of Stevens Court jurisprudence do testify to Stevens's personality and skills.

Such as?

The hallmark, in my view, is his ability to gracefully walk the conservatives back from the brink to which their prior opinions have brought the Court. Here's the pattern: The conservative majority writes a set of opinions that do little damage to liberal values on their own but could do enormous damage if taken to their logical conclu-

sions. A case arises in which the earlier opinions, if applied, would become far more consequential, and one or more of the conservatives get cold feet. Stevens then either writes or allows the balking justice to write an opinion that doesn't challenge the decisions this justice has previously signed yet interprets those potentially dangerous cases in a fashion that renders them innocuous.

This happened last term in the medical-marijuana case, which dealt with the extent of Congress's power to regulate interstate commerce—an area in which the conservatives had been flirt-



ing with a revolutionary revision. In a pair of cases from 1995 and 2000 the Court—with Stevens dissenting—had for the first time in decades struck down federal statutes as exceeding Congress's commerce power. Although the particular statutes were not terribly important, the opinions raised the question of how far the Court might go to rein in federal power. In the medical-marijuana case, however, Stevens seized control of the issue. With Kennedy joining his opinion and Scalia writing a separate concurrence, he interpreted those two cases narrowly and reasserted the primacy of the broader reading of the interstate-commerce clause embraced by the Court over the previous half century.

It's also what happened in the Lake

Tahoe case, in which Stevens walked the Court away from reading the Fifth Amendment's takings clause to require that landowners be compensated for the costs of complying with environmental regulations. And in the arcane but important area of the Eleventh Amendment, Stevens scored a similar triumph with the 2004 case of *Tennessee v. Lane*. As in the commerce-clause cases, the conservatives had toyed with a substantial narrowing of federal power—in this instance by immunizing state governments from lawsuits under a variety of federal statutes. Stevens had dissented from the whole series of cases, once describing them as “so profoundly mistaken and so fundamentally inconsistent with the Framers’ conception of the constitutional order that [they have] forsaken any claim to the usual deference or respect owed to decisions of this Court.” In *Lane*, having bagged O'Connor's vote to allow suits under a provision of the Americans With Disabilities Act, he took the opportunity to construe Congress's power to authorize such suits far more broadly than the Court had done in recent cases.

As Doug Kendall, an environmental lawyer who closely follows the Court's federalism cases, puts it, “Stevens has won the Court by writing opinions that seamlessly merge the old with the new, [reconciling] the precedents of the Brennan and Rehnquist eras in a way neither of the Justices would have thought possible.” Another way of putting it is that he has offered conservatives a face-saving way to back down from the radical implications of their earlier opinions.

Or an opportunity to contradict themselves?

Well, it's true that Stevens's gallantry toward his conservative colleagues sometimes leads the Court into absur-

dities. When, for instance, the Court struck down the death penalty for the mentally retarded, in 2002, the majority faced the problem that the Court had upheld the practice only thirteen years earlier—and that O'Connor, now willing to reject it, had been part of the majority back then. Rather than embarrass her by stating what he clearly believed—that the Court had gotten it wrong the first time around—Stevens wrote a strained opinion declaring implausibly that circumstances had changed so much (in a little over a decade) that what was then constitutional had become unconstitutional.

Last year, when the Court struck down the juvenile death penalty, it was Kennedy who gave Stevens his majority; and like O'Connor, Kennedy was in the uncomfortable position of having voted earlier to uphold the very practice the Court was now overturning. Stevens assigned him to write the majority opinion and penned a preposterous little concurrence, devoid of legal argumentation, that patted him on the back: “If great lawyers of [Chief Justice John Marshall's] day—Alexander Hamilton, for example—were sitting with us today, I would expect them to join Justice Kennedy's opinion for the Court.”

How long can Stevens keep it up?

Who knows? His job probably won't get any easier if and when Judge Samuel Alito replaces O'Connor. And he is, of course, eighty-five; though still vigorous and mentally sharp, he could fade at any time. Roberts has precisely the combination of exceptional intelligence and great interpersonal skills that could wrest the Court from his hands—and he will almost surely outlast Stevens.

But don't underestimate Stevens in the short term. He's wily and creative. He shows no sign of wanting to quit. And why should he? He's on quite a roll. In the coming few terms I would bet that he, not Roberts, will assign the most important majority opinions when the two disagree. Roberts may be the chief, but he's going to have to win the Court that bears his name. ▀

Benjamin Wittes is an editorial writer for The Washington Post.

Primary Sources

The religion effect; a less violent world; one (very good) reason to resist early retirement

SOCIETY

For Better or Worse

The latest figures from the National Center for Health Statistics indicate that in 2004 a record 1.5 million children were born out of wedlock, nearly 400,000 of them to African-American mothers (69 percent of black newborns that year were born to unmarried women). The difficulties these women face as single mothers are well known, but a recent study suggests that in one respect black women are even worse off if they marry. According to the Institute for American Values, which recently conducted a comprehensive review of data on marriage among African-Americans, married blacks of both sexes tend to have better incomes, face a lower risk of poverty, and report higher levels of happiness than their unmarried counterparts. However, while married black men report better health than single black men, married black women report poorer health than single black women. Black women, the researchers conclude, benefit much less from marriage than white women do, whereas the benefits for black men and white men are roughly equal. The report suggests that racial differences in "marital quality" (white marriages tend to be happier and less conflict-ridden than black marriages) may account for the health gap—which in turn suggests that unhappy marriages take

a greater physical toll on women than on men.

—"Preliminary Births for 2004," NCHS; "The Consequences of Marriage for African-Americans," Lorraine Blackman et al., Institute for American Values

Heaven Help Us

Sociologists have long observed that religious participation correlates with lower levels of criminality,

better health, greater marital stability, and greater self-reported well-being. They do not know, however, whether these effects are produced by religion itself or by other factors. An MIT economist recently investigated the matter by studying neighborhoods where many residents share a religion. He found both greater-than-average religious participation (Catholics are likelier to attend mass if they live in a heavily Catholic neighborhood, for example) and better economic and social indicators, including higher income and education lev-

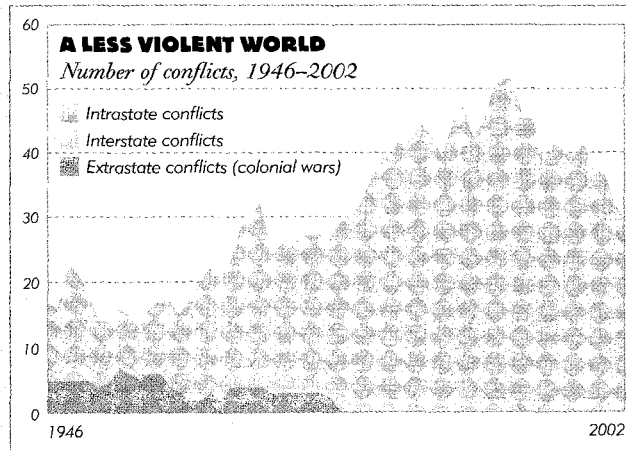
els and lower divorce rates. Other studies have shown that these indicators are lower than average in ethnic neighborhoods—suggesting that religion in particular, not a general sense of ethnic community or solidarity, leads to the gains. The author found minimal correlation between the religious makeup of a neighborhood and civic participation other than church-going—suggesting, similarly, that religious activity in particular, not civic activity in general, is the salient factor. He posits four ideas that might explain his findings: participating in religious activities may increase social interaction, and therefore social capital, in ways that participating in, say, ethnically oriented activities does not; religious institutions may provide greater emotional and financial resources than others during hard times; attending religious schools may bring some as-yet-unidentified extra benefits; and finally, religion may improve well-being directly, perhaps by reducing stress.

—"Religious Market Structure, Religious Participation, and Outcomes: Is Religion Good for You?," Jonathan Gruber, National Bureau of Economic Research

SECURITY

Peace on Earth

Newspaper headlines notwithstanding, a new study from the Canada-based Human Security Centre suggests that the world is less violent now than it has been in recent memory. The number of ongoing armed conflicts is 40 percent lower now than in 1992, and the number of deadly conflicts—defined as wars leading to 1,000 or more combat deaths—is 80 percent lower. The number of military coups and attempted coups was 60 percent lower in 2004 than in 1963. And the annual number of victims of genocides and mass killings fell by 80 percent from 1989 to 2001, even taking such places as Bosnia and Rwanda into account.



The exception to this generally positive trend, of course, is terrorism. To explain the overall decline in violence, the report cites the end of the Cold War and the proxy conflicts that it fueled in developing nations; the end of the often bloody process of decolonization; and UN diplomacy, sanctions, and peacekeeping missions.

—"The Human Security Report," Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia

Nothing Left to Live For?

If you're thinking about kicking back at age fifty-five in order to make the most of your golden years, you may want to consider a new study published in the *British Medical Journal*, which finds that early retirees have higher mortality than workers who stay on the job. Researchers followed thousands of employees of Shell Oil who retired at fifty-five, sixty, and sixty-five, tracking them for up to thirty-one years and

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controlling for sex and socioeconomic status. The employees who retired at sixty-five tended to live longer than those who retired at fifty-five. (Little difference was seen between those who retired at sixty and at sixty-five.) Some of the difference can, of course, be explained by the fact that many workers who retire early do so because of failing health—and indeed, mortality for those aged fifty-five to sixty-five was almost twice as high among those who retired at fifty-five as among those who continued working. But even those early retirees who were healthy enough to reach their sixty-fifth birthdays had a shorter lifespan than those who retired at sixty-five.

—“Age at Retirement and Long Term Survival of an Industrial Population: Prospective Cohort Study,” Shan P. Tsai et al., *British Medical Journal*

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Poor Get Richer

Political freedom isn't the only thing declining in the former Soviet Union: according to a recent World Bank study, poverty and inequality are also diminishing, as they are in many other countries of the former Soviet bloc.

From 1998 to 2003 the proportion of poverty-stricken citizens (defined as those who earn \$2.00 a day or less) in most countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union fell from about one in five to one in eight—a total decrease of 40 million people. (Notable exceptions include Poland and Georgia, where poverty has risen.) And in many countries, including Russia, the poor have seen bigger gains than the rich. But the most rapid decline in poverty has occurred almost entirely in

MEDICINE

Physician, Heal Thy Country

Brain drain has long impeded development in the poorer parts of the world, and the loss of doctors in particular has been a stumbling block in countries struggling with rampant disease and inadequate health care. New research published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* quantifies the problem and gives cause for continued concern. According to the study, four English-speaking First World countries increasingly depend on doctors who have immigrated. Roughly one fourth of all doctors in the United States, the UK, Australia, and Canada were born elsewhere; of those, anywhere from 40 percent (in Australia) to 75 percent (in the UK) come from low-income countries. (This dependence is largely confined to these four countries: in only three of the other twenty-six OECD nations do foreigners make up more than 10 percent of all physicians.) In absolute numbers, India supplies the most doctors to the four Anglophone countries cited, followed by the Philippines and Pakistan. However, the biggest proportional losses tend to be in Caribbean and sub-Saharan countries. And matters are likely to get worse before they get better, the study notes: mounting pressure in developed countries to increase the number of doctors will probably lead to further recruitment from overseas.

PHYSICIAN BRAIN DRAIN

	Number practicing in United States, UK, Australia, or Canada	Number practicing in their own country	Percent who emigrated to those four countries
1. Jamaica	1,589	2,253	41.4
2. Ireland	6,423	9,166	41.2
3. Haiti	1,067	1,949	35.4
4. Ghana	791	1,842	30.0
5. Sri Lanka	3,027	7,963	27.5
6. New Zealand	2,483	8,491	22.6
7. Lebanon	2,749	11,505	19.3
8. South Africa	6,993	30,740	18.5
9. Dominican Republic	3,262	15,670	17.2
10. Philippines	18,303	91,408	16.7

—“The Metrics of the Physician Brain Drain,” Fitzhugh Mullan, *The New England Journal of Medicine*

large cities, leaving many people behind. In Uzbekistan, to cite just one example, 55 percent of the population in the countryside still lives in poverty, compared with only four percent in the capital, Tashkent. Altogether more than 60 million in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union remain poor, while 150 million others are deemed “economically vulnerable”—meaning they earn \$4.00 a day or less.

—“Growth, Poverty, and Inequality: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union,” World Bank

BUSINESS

Blog-aholics

Most of us will admit to wasting some time at work. But three new studies suggest that more time is lost now than ever before. According to a survey by the magazine *Advertising Age*, a leading culprit is Weblogs. The survey indicates that one in four U.S. workers reads blogs regularly while at work, losing, on average, some nine percent of the workweek. This amounts to 551,000 years of labor lost in 2005 alone. If only the bloggers whose words seem

so compelling were the ones sending us e-mail: 34 percent of workers surveyed by Information Mapping, Inc. reported wasting thirty to sixty minutes a day trying to interpret “ineffectively” written messages. A third study offers comfort—or at least a way to pass the buck for all the lost time. Having examined productivity in nine countries, it concludes that 37 percent of the time spent at work is wasted—but that poor management and inadequate supervision are largely to blame.

—“What Blogs Cost American Business,” Bradley Johnson, *Advertising Age*; “Information Mapping Survey Reveals Email Writing Skills Vital to Job Effectiveness,” Information Mapping, Inc.; “2005 Proudfoot Productivity Report,” Proudfoot Consulting

THE LAW

Laws and Effect

As the Supreme Court considers the constitutionality of a New Hampshire law requiring parental notification for abortions, a new study provides some information about the impact of parental-notification and parental-consent laws on U.S. teenagers' sexual behavior. It finds that laws in both categories correlate with a reduced rate of gonorrhea infection—a marker of high-risk sexual activity. After such laws were passed, gonorrhea rates fell by 20 percent among Hispanic teenage girls and by 12 percent among their white counterparts.

—“Abortion Access and Risky Sex Among Teens: Parental Involvement Laws and Sexually Transmitted Diseases,” Jonathan Klick, Florida State University, and Thomas Strattmann, George Mason University

Compiled by Ross Douthat, Marshall Poe, and Abigail Cutler. For links to the documents discussed in these pages visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200601/primarysources

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The Border

Illegal immigration is once again a potent political issue

More than 1.3 million people were caught trying to enter the United States illegally from Mexico in 2004. Nearly 200,000 were attempting to cross, often concealed in vehicles, at one of the twenty-five U.S.-Mexican Customs stations; most of the rest—those indicated on the map—were apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol, while making their way across the Rio Grande or the Sonora Desert or through the fences and other barriers separating Tijuana from southern California.

The Border Patrol has become much larger and more sophisticated in recent decades. Since the current wave of illegal Mexican immigration began, in the mid-1970s, the number of agents along the southern U.S. border has risen from 2,000 to 11,000. Roadways have been extended into remote areas to give agents better access to smuggling routes; floodlights, motion sensors, and remote video cameras have been installed; and agents have started patrolling in aircraft as well as on the ground. Last year the Border Patrol deployed a "Predator B" unmanned aerial vehicle—the first American UAV put to civilian use. It provides real-time bird's-eye views of previously inaccessible areas, transmitting images that are quickly relayed to agents on the ground.

But, of course, the migrants keep slipping through. The Border Patrol will not speculate about how many evade capture and enter the United States; the Pew Hispanic Center recently estimated that, on average, 485,000 Mexicans have crossed the border illegally every year since 2000, and that more illegal than legal aliens have entered the country altogether since 1995.

Immigration pressure from Mexico is unlikely to abate anytime soon. Nearly half of all Mexicans asked by Pew said they would come to the United States immediately if they had

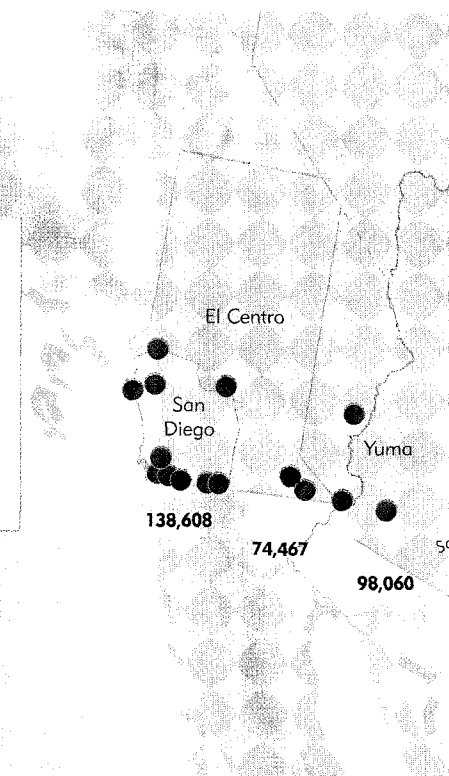
UNCLOGGING THE ARTERIES

As recently as the 1980s the major roads leading from the border to San Diego, El Paso, and other southwestern cities were essentially lawless. Migrants wandered along highways, buying food from vendors and even stopping to play in pickup soccer games. A vigorous campaign to stanch the influx in high-traffic areas, mounted in 1994, has largely restored order—and rerouted the migrants to the vast, remote regions between cities.

"the means and opportunity." Twenty-one percent said they would do so even if they had to come illegally. Indeed, many Mexicans seem to have a sense of entitlement regarding the United States: 58 percent surveyed in a 2002 Zogby poll believe that "the territory of the United States' Southwest rightfully belongs to Mexico."

Americans are unhappy about this state of affairs: according to recent polls, most favor beefing up the enforcement of immigration laws and using troops to police the border. A majority even voiced support for the Minuteman Project, a group of civilian vigilantes who have begun patrolling the border themselves.

However, political leaders in both parties (along with many business organizations, media outlets, and bipartisan interest groups) see the issue differently, believing that restricting immigration is not economically desirable. The immigration proposals currently circulating in Washington seem unlikely to reduce the influx from the south. They are aimed instead at regularizing it, by creating a temporary-visa program for migrant laborers. Although such a "guest worker" program might be paired with legislation to tighten border security and curb the hiring of illegal immigrants, as President Bush suggested in a November policy speech, there's reason to doubt that serious restrictions would actually result. The last major immigration reform, in 1986, was supposed to provide a similar tradeoff—an amnesty program for illegal aliens already in the United States was joined to a com-

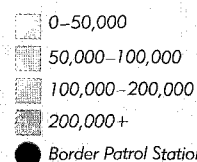


DEADLY CROSSINGS

As the Border Patrol has expanded, smugglers have been guiding migrants along ever more remote trails. This, combined with a hotter than usual summer, resulted in the known deaths of 473 would-be immigrants in 2005—a 40 percent increase over the previous year, and the most since 1998, when the Border Patrol started keeping an official count. According to the Border Patrol's records, 2,698 people have died while trying to enter the United States from the south in that time.

BORDER PATROL APPREHENSIONS

by sector



mitment to crack down on employers of illegal immigrants. The amnesty was implemented; the crackdown fizzled out. And in December of 2004 Congress authorized the addition of 10,000 Border Patrol agents over a five-year period beginning in 2006—but only 210 new positions were funded for this year.

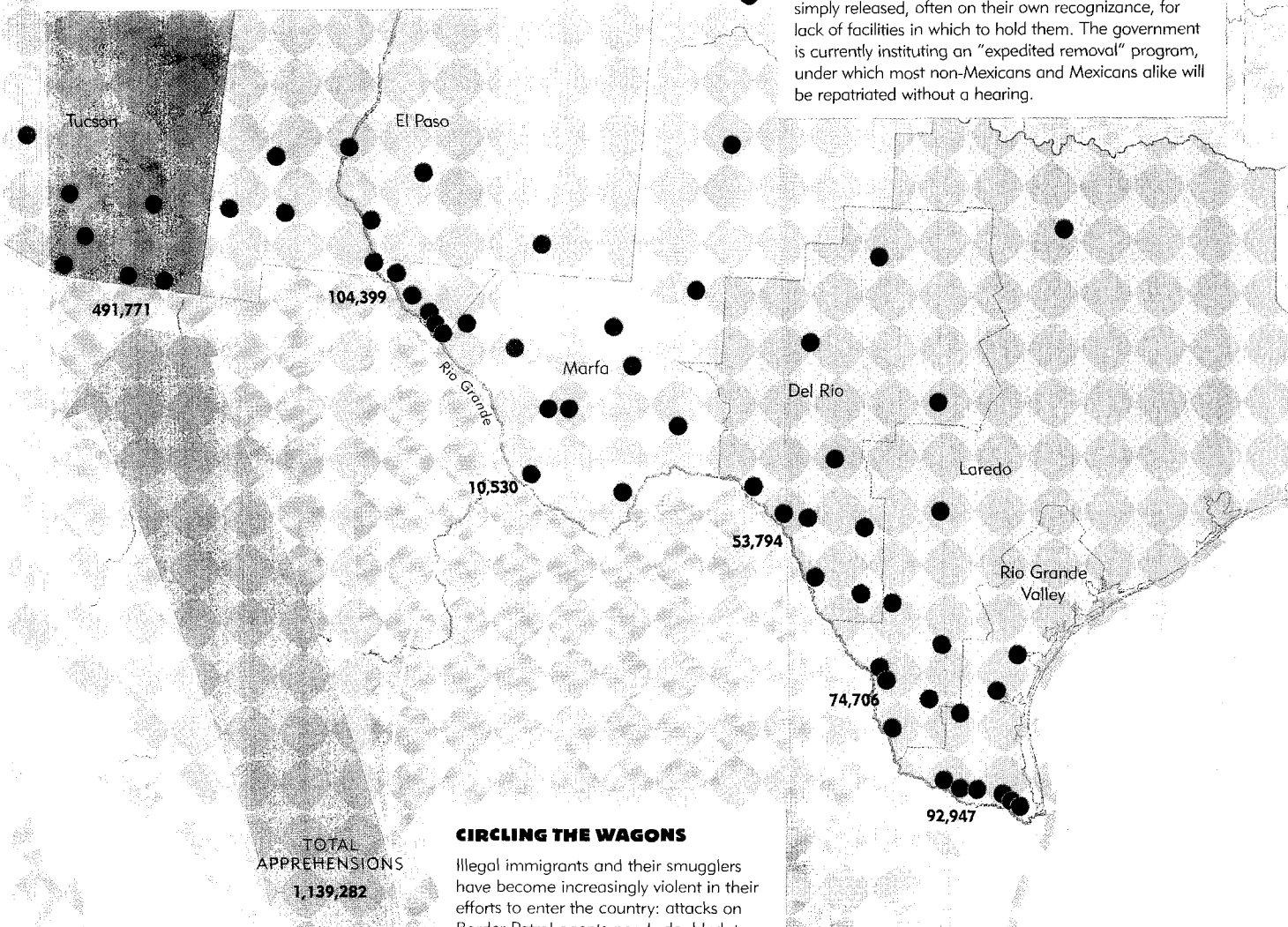
This gap between popular and elite opinion means that the porousness of the border is becoming a potent issue, especially for working-class voters, whose jobs may be vulnerable

THE SNOWBIRDS' NEW NEIGHBORS

In 2004 half a million illegal migrants were apprehended in Arizona—more than in any other state. Many cross a wide expanse of the Sonora Desert, south of Tucson. Last year the Border Patrol doubled its surveillance aircraft over the Tucson Sector and increased the number of border agents there by 25 percent. The unofficial number of apprehensions in 2005 dropped by 11 percent, indicating a significant reduction in attempts to enter the state.

CATCH AND RELEASE

Most Mexicans caught crossing into the United States are immediately returned to Mexico without a hearing; it's been a different story, however, when it comes to other foreign nationals, who must appear before a judge to determine whether they can be deported. Last year 120,000 of the 160,000 non-Mexicans apprehended by the Border Patrol were assigned a court date and then simply released, often on their own recognizance, for lack of facilities in which to hold them. The government is currently instituting an "expedited removal" program, under which most non-Mexicans and Mexicans alike will be repatriated without a hearing.



CIRCLING THE WAGONS

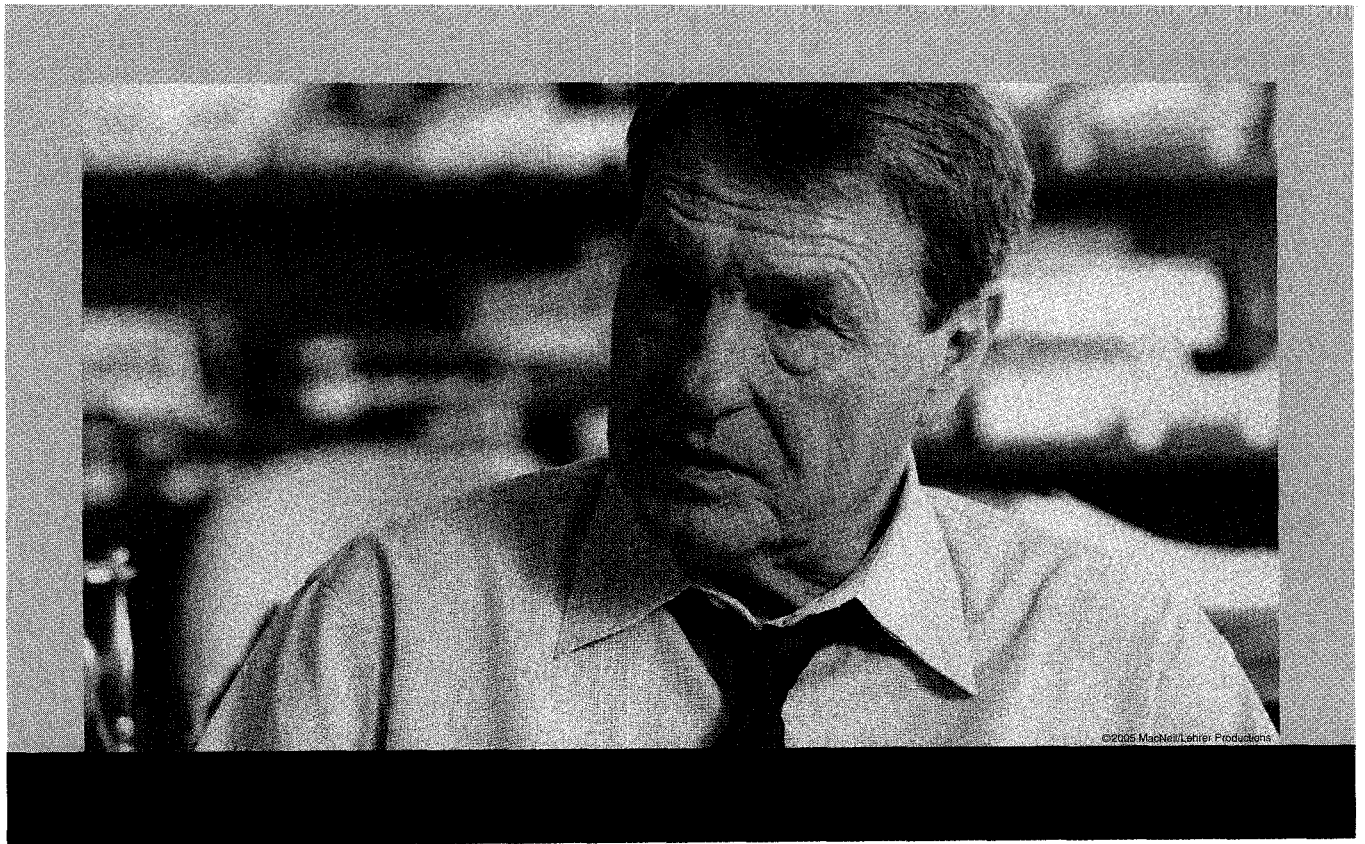
Illegal immigrants and their smugglers have become increasingly violent in their efforts to enter the country: attacks on Border Patrol agents nearly doubled, to 687, from 2004 to 2005. Agents have been shot at, assaulted with slingshots loaded with marbles and ball bearings, and victimized by "rockings"—having rocks hurled at them from the Mexican side of the border. In response they have started launching exploding containers of pepper spray and using customized rock-proof vehicles, dubbed "war wagons."

to guest-worker programs. Tom Tancredo, a Republican congressman from Colorado, has threatened to make an insurgent run for the 2008 GOP presidential nomination if no other candidate comes out strongly against illegal immigration, and observers speculate that Democrats might use the issue to try to outflank the GOP on the right. (Last year the governors of New Mexico and Arizona, both Democrats, declared states of emergency because of the influx of illegal immigrants, blaming the federal govern-

ment for failing to secure the border.)

Nativist politics hasn't fared well in recent decades. And securing the border may not be feasible no matter what the public wants—at least absent a heavy military presence and the sorts of barriers used in Cold War Berlin

and the Korean DMZ. (Spending on border security rose dramatically during the 1990s, but so did the number of illegal immigrants.) However, unless the gap on this issue between America's leaders and its citizenry is somehow narrowed, whether by stringent reform or by rising economic optimism on Main Street, a populist backlash could ensue—against both illegal immigrants themselves and those many see as their enablers in Washington. —ROSS DOUTHAT AND JENNY WOODSON



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Politics & Presidents

MOST AMERICANS ARE HARD PRESSED TO IDENTIFY *presidents by their landmark accomplishments or failings. No doubt most remember Abraham Lincoln as the president who led the country through the Civil War, and Richard Nixon as the only chief executive to have resigned the office. But could more than a handful say what Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, or Theodore Roosevelt achieved during his White House term? How many Americans know that Woodrow Wilson was the architect of the Federal Reserve; that the Securities and Exchange Commission and the minimum wage began with FDR's New Deal; or that Lyndon Johnson was responsible for Medicare and federal aid to elementary, secondary, and higher education?*

Presidential standing with the mass of Americans has been more about a man's character and inspirational leadership. Did he stand for something distinctive as president? Did he appeal to our better angels? Did he speak in memorable ways to what we value most about our national traditions? "With malice toward none; with charity for all," the "bully pulpit," "a war to make the world safe for democracy," and "Ask not what your country can do for you ..." resonate with Americans more powerfully than any specific actions that Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Wilson, or John F. Kennedy took as president.

The Atlantic pieces excerpted here attest to why these four presidents exert an enduring hold on our imaginations. Lincoln's integrity and standing as a "statesman" rather than a "politician"; Wilson's regard for "originative personality" and the national tradition of individualism; Roosevelt's insistence that the country's best and brightest have indisputable civic responsibilities; and Kennedy's admiration for the artists and writers who speak truth to power reflect national core values that tie these presidents to every generation of U.S. citizens. —ROBERT DALLEK

LINCOLN FOR PRESIDENT

October 1860

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

.....

Shortly before the 1860 presidential election The Atlantic's editor, James Russell Lowell, came out in support of Abraham Lincoln, whom he commended as a "statesman" and a powerful voice against the spread of slavery. He predicted, accurately, that the election would prove to be "a turning-point in our history."

In a society like ours, where every man may transmute his private thought into history and destiny by dropping it into the ballot-box, a peculiar responsibility rests upon the individual ... Every fourth year the people are called upon to pronounce upon the conduct of their affairs... In exercising his right [the individual voter] becomes for the moment an integral part of the governing power ...

We believe that this election is a turning-point in our history; for, although there are four candidates, there are really, as everybody knows, but two parties, and a single question that divides them ...

We are persuaded that the election of Mr. Lincoln will do more than anything else to appease the excitement of the country. He has proved both his ability and his integrity; he has had experience

enough in public affairs to make him a statesman, and not enough to make him a politician ... He represents a party who know that true policy is gradual in its advances, that it is conditional and not absolute, that it must deal with facts and not with sentiments, but who know also that it is wiser to stamp out evil in the spark than to wait till there is no help but in fighting fire with fire. They are the only conservative party, because they are the only one based on an enduring principle, the only one that is not willing to pawn tomorrow for the means to gamble with today. They have no hostility to the South, but a determined one to doctrines of whose ruinous tendency every day more and more convinces them.

The encroachments of Slavery upon our national policy have been like those of a glacier in a Swiss valley. Inch by inch, the huge dragon with his glittering scales and crests of ice coils itself onward, an anachronism of summer, the relic of a bygone world where such monsters swarmed. But it has its limit, the kindlier forces of Nature work against it, and the silent arrows of the sun are still, as of old, fatal

to the frosty Python. Geology tells us that such enormous devastators once covered the face of the earth, but the benignant sunlight of heaven touched them, and they faded silently, leaving no trace but here and there the scratches of their talons, and the gnawed boulders scattered where they made their lair. We have entire faith in the

This is the first in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary. This installment is introduced by Robert Dallek, a presidential historian who is writing a book on Nixon and Kissinger.

benignant influence of Truth, the sunlight of the moral world, and believe that slavery, like other worn-out systems, will melt gradually before it. "All the earth cries out upon Truth, and the heaven blesseth it; ill works shake and tremble at it, and with it is no unrighteous thing."

Volume 6, Number 36, pp. 492-502

HOW BOOKS BECOME IMMORTAL

September 1891

BY WOODROW WILSON

.....

In 1891 Woodrow Wilson—then a popular professor at Princeton and a frequent contributor to The Atlantic—considered what it is about the greatest authors that makes their works last. (Wilson later went on to become the president of Princeton, the governor of New Jersey, and—after defeating both Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft in a three-way race in 1912—the president of the United States.)

Who can help wondering, concerning the modern multitude of books, where all these companions of his reading hours will be buried when they die; which will have monuments erected to them; which escape the envy of time and live. It is pathetic to think of the number that must be forgotten, after being removed from the good places to make room for their betters.

Much the most pathetic thought about books, however, is that excellence will not save them. Their fates will be as whimsical as those of the humankind which produces them. Knaves find it as easy to get remembered as good men. It is not right living or learning or kind offices, simply and of themselves, but something else that gives immortality of fame. Be a book never so scholarly, it may die; be it never so witty, or never so full of good feeling or of an honest statement of truth, it may not live.

When once a book has become immortal, we think that we can see why it became so. It contained, we perceive, a casting of thought which could not but arrest and retain men's attention; it said some things once and for all because it gave them their best saying. Or else it spoke with a grace or with a fire of imagination, with a sweet cadence of phrase and a full harmony of tone, which have made it equally dear to all generations of those who love the free play of fanciful thought or the incomparable music of perfected human speech. Or perhaps it uttered with full candor and simplicity some universal sentiment; perchance pictured something in the tragedy or the comedy of man's life as it was never pictured before, and must on that account be read and read again as not to be superseded. There must be something special, we judge, either in its form or in its

substance, to account for its unwonted fame and fortune.

This upon first analysis, taking one book at a time. A look deeper into the heart of the matter enables us to catch at least a glimpse of a single and common source of immortality. The world is attracted by books as each man is attracted by his several friends. You recommend that capital fellow So-and-So to the acquaintance of others because of his discriminating and diverting powers of observation: the very tones and persons—it would seem the very selves—of every type of man live again in his mimicries and descriptions. He is the dramatist of your circle; you can never forget him, nor can any one else; his circle of acquaintances can never grow smaller. Could he live on and retain perennially that wonderful freshness and vivacity of his, he must become the most famous guest and favorite of the world. Who that has known a man quick and shrewd to see dispassionately the inner history, the reason and the ends, of the combinations of society, and at the same time eloquent to tell of them, with a hold on the attention gained by a certain quaint force and sagacity resident in no other man, can find it difficult to understand why men still resort to Montesquieu? Possibly there are circles favored of the gods who have known some fellow of infinite store of miscellaneous and curious learning, who has greatly diverted both himself and his friends by a way peculiar to himself of giving it out upon any and all occasions, item by item, as if it were all homogeneous and of a piece, and by his odd skill in making unexpected application of it to out-of-the-way, unpromising subjects, as if there were in his view of things mental no such disintegrating element as incongruity. Such a circle would esteem it strange were Burton not beloved of the world. And so of those, if any there be, who have known men of simple, calm, transparent natures, untouched by storm or perplexity, whose talk was full of such serious, placid reflection as seemed to mirror their own reverent hearts,—talk often prosy, but oftener touchingly beautiful because of its nearness to nature and the solemn truth of life. There may be those, also, who have felt the thrill of personal contact with some stormy peasant nature full of strenuous, unsparing speech concerning men and affairs. These have known, have experienced, why a Wordsworth or a Carlyle must be read by all generations of those who love words of first-hand inspiration. In short, in every case of literary immortality there is present origination. Not origination simply,—that may be mere invention, which in literature has nothing immortal about it; but origination which takes its stamp and character from the originator, which is his substance given to the world, which is himself outspoken ...

It is best for the author to be born away from literary centres, or to be excluded from their ruling set if he be born in them. It is best that he start out with his thinking, not knowing how much has been thought and said about

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everything. A certain amount of ignorance will insure his sincerity, will increase his boldness and shelter his genuineness, which is his hope of power. Not ignorance of life, but life may be learned in any neighborhood;—not ignorance of the greater laws which govern human affairs, but they may be learned without a library of historians and commentators, by imaginative sense, by seeing better than by reading;—not ignorance of the infinitudes of human circumstance, but knowledge of these may come to a man without the intervention of universities;—not ignorance of one's self and of one's neighbor, but innocence of the sophistications of learning, its research without love, its knowledge without inspiration, its method without grace; freedom from its shame at trying to know many things as well as from its pride of trying to know but one thing; ignorance of that faith in small confounding facts which is contempt for large reassuring principles ...

It would seem to be necessary that the author who is to stand as a distinct and imperative individual among the company of those who express the world's thought should come to a hard crystallization before subjecting himself to the tense strain of cities, the dissolvent acids of critical circles. The ability to see for one's self is attainable, not by mixing with crowds and ascertaining how they look at things, but by a certain aloofness and self-containment. The solitariness of some genius is not accidental; it is characteristic and essential. To the constructive imagination there are some immortal feats which are possible only in seclusion. The man must heed first and most of all the suggestions of his own spirit; and the world can be seen from windows overlooking the street better than from the street itself.

Volume 68, Number 407, pp. 406-413

WHAT COLLEGE GRADUATES OWE AMERICA

August 1894

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

.....

Seven years before he assumed the presidency, Theodore Roosevelt, then a thirty-five-year-old member of the Civil Service Commission and a regular Atlantic contributor, argued that it is incumbent upon men of means and education to take an active role in public affairs.

It is proper to demand more from the man with exceptional advantages than from the man without them. A heavy moral obligation rests upon the man of means and upon the man of education to do their full duty by their country. On no class does this obligation rest more heavily than upon the men with a collegiate education, the

men who are graduates of our universities. Their education gives them no right to feel the least superiority over any of their fellow-citizens; but it certainly ought to make them feel that they should stand foremost in the honorable effort to serve the whole public by doing their duty as Americans in the body politic ...

To the great body of men who have had exceptional advantages in the way of educational facilities we have a right, then, to look for good service to the state. The service may be rendered in many different ways. In a reasonable number of cases, the man may himself rise to high political position. That men actually do so rise is shown by the number of graduates of Harvard, Yale, and our other universities who are now taking a prominent part in public life. These cases must necessarily, however, form but a small part of the whole. The enormous majority of our educated men have to make their own living, and are obliged to take up careers in which they must work heart and soul to succeed. Nevertheless, the man of business and the man of science, the doctor of divinity and the doctor of law, the architect, the engineer, and the writer, all alike owe a positive duty to the community, the neglect of which they cannot excuse on any plea of their private affairs. They are bound to follow understandingly the course of public events; they are bound to try to estimate and form judgment upon public men; and they are bound to act intelligently and effectively in support of the principles which they deem to be right and for the best interests of the country ...

For educated men of weak fibre, there lies a real danger in that species of literary work which appeals to their cultivated senses because of its scholarly and pleasant tone, but which enjoins as the proper attitude to assume in public life one of mere criticism and negation; which teaches the adoption toward public men and public affairs of that sneering tone which so surely denotes a mean and small mind. If a man does not have belief and enthusiasm, the chances are small indeed that he will ever do a man's work in the world ...

Again, there is a certain tendency in college life ... to make educated men shrink from contact with the rough people who do the world's work, and associate only with one another and with those who think as they do. This is a most dangerous tendency. It is very agreeable to deceive one's self into the belief that one is performing the whole duty of man by sitting at home in ease, doing nothing wrong, and confining one's participation in politics to conversations and meetings with men who have had the same training and look at things in the same way. It is always a temptation to do this, because those who do nothing else often speak as if in some way they deserved credit for their attitude, and as if they stood above their brethren who plough the rough fields ...

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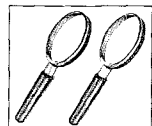
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This is a snare round which it behooves every young man to walk carefully. Let him beware of associating only with the people of his own caste and of his own little ways of political thought. Let him learn that he must deal with the mass of men; that he must go out and stand shoulder to shoulder with his friends of every rank, and face to face with his foes of every rank, and must bear himself well in the hurly-burly. He must not be frightened by the many unpleasant features of the contest, and he must not expect to have it all his own way, or to accomplish too much. He will meet with checks and make many mistakes; but if he perseveres, he will achieve a measure of success and will do a measure of good such as is never possible to the refined, cultivated, intellectual men who shrink aside from the actual fray ...

No man ever really learned from books how to manage a governmental system. Books are admirable adjuncts, and the statesman who has carefully studied them is far more apt to do good work than if he had not; but if he has never done anything but study books he will not be a statesman at all ...

In conclusion, then, the man with a university education is in honor bound to take an active part in our political life, and to do his full duty as a citizen by helping his fellow-citizens to the extent of his power in the exercise of the rights of self-government. He is bound to rank action far above criticism, and to understand that the man deserving of credit is the man who actually does the things, even though imperfectly, and not the man who confines himself to talking about how they ought to be done.

Volume 74, Number 442, pp. 255-260

THE PURPOSE OF POETRY

February 1964

BY JOHN F. KENNEDY

.....

Less than a month before his assassination President Kennedy gave a speech at Amherst College in honor of the late poet Robert Frost. He emphasized the importance of the poet in American society as critic, commentator, and "champion of the individual mind and sensibility." The speech was later published in The Atlantic.

A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers ...

The men who create power make an indispensable contribution to the nation's greatness, but the men who question power make a contribution just as indispensable, especially when that questioning is disinterested, for they determine whether we use power or power uses us ...

When power leads man toward arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses, for art establishes the basic human truths which must serve as the touchstones of our judgment. The artist, however faithful to his personal vision of reality, becomes the last champion of the individual mind and sensibility against an intrusive society and an officious state. The great artist is thus a solitary figure. He has, as Frost said, "a lover's quarrel with the world." In pursuing his perceptions of reality he must often sail against the currents of his time ...

If sometimes our great artists have been the most critical of our society, it is because their sensitivity and their concern for justice, which must motivate any true artist, make them aware that our nation falls short of its highest potential.

I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him ...

In free society art is not a weapon, and it does not belong to the sphere of polemics and ideology. Artists are not engineers of the soul. It may be different elsewhere. But in a democratic society the highest duty of the writer, the composer, the artist, is to remain true to himself and to let the chips fall where they may. In serving his vision of the truth, the artist best serves his nation ...

I look forward to a great future for America—a future in which our country will match its military strength with our moral strength, its wealth with our wisdom, its power with our purpose.

I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty, which will protect the beauty of our natural environment, which will preserve the great old American houses and squares and parks of our national past, and which will build handsome and balanced cities for our future.

I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft.

I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens.

And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world, not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.

And I look forward to a world which will be safe, not only for democracy and diversity but also for personal distinction.

Volume 213, Number 2, pp. 53-54

Who's making a fortune?
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THE YEAR OF TWO POPES

*How Joseph Ratzinger stepped into the shoes of John Paul II—
and what it means for the Catholic Church*

BY PAUL ELIE

Illustrations by James Noel Smith

.....

I. A POPE AFTER LUNCH

The cardinals took their seats in long rows on two sides of the Sistine Chapel, tucking their cassocks beneath them. A hymn was sung, a prayer said, an oath taken. The doors were locked. Then, with ritual solemnity, the cardinals rose one by one to cast their ballots in the first "scrutiny." Each man stepped to the front of the room, declared that he was voting for the man he believed to be God's choice as the next pope, and then dropped a paper ballot into an urn.

It was Monday, April 18, 2005. Two weeks earlier the body of John Paul II had been laid out beneath the great dome of St. Peter's Basilica, the feet (in old brown shoes) pointing straight upward in a final expression of earthly vigor. Now 115 cardinals were meeting to elect his successor—to find out which of them would be next to lie in state in St. Peter's.

Three cardinals counted the ballots. Three others checked their work. Seventy-seven votes were needed for election: two thirds plus one. In this first scrutiny perhaps fifty cardinals had cast their ballots for Joseph Ratzinger, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Perhaps ten had cast ballots for Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a Jesuit and the archbishop of Buenos Aires; nine for Carlo Maria Martini, another Jesuit and the retired archbishop of Milan; six for Camillo Ruini, the vicar of Rome; four for Angelo Sodano, the Vatican's secretary of state; and many for scattered others. The ballots were burned in the chapel furnace; black smoke issued from a chimney visible from St. Peter's Square. The doors of the chapel were unlocked and the cardinals descended a grand staircase. A small fleet of minibuses awaited them; they clambered aboard and were taken to the Domus Santa Marta, a \$20 million guest-house a few hundred yards away. The conclave's first day was over, and Cardinal Ratzinger, for a quarter century one of John Paul's closest advisers, was something like a presumptive pope.

At the Santa Marta the cardinals ate supper in the refectory. Afterward they prayed, read, paced, or smoked, stepping outside to avoid the ban on

smoking indoors, enforced even for cardinals electing a new pope. Some cardinals paid a visit to Cardinal Martini. Some visited with Cardinal Bergoglio. At least one wrote in his diary, which he would show to a reporter after the conclave. They went to sleep, rose, washed, prayed, dressed, and celebrated mass all together in the modern chapel of the Santa Marta. They ate breakfast, were dressed again in red and white, and were taken back to the Sistine Chapel, where they cast their ballots in the second scrutiny.

This time more than sixty of them voted for Ratzinger. Perhaps thirty-five voted for Bergoglio. Not one voted for Martini. In the night the votes for the one Jesuit had passed to the other, and the unassuming Bergoglio had emerged as the candidate of those who opposed the formidable Ratzinger. The cardinals voted again. In the third scrutiny Ratzinger gained votes, to seventy or more. Bergoglio also gained, climbing to perhaps forty votes. The ballots were burned. The chimney smoked black. From Michelangelo's fresco of the Last Judgment, Jesus Christ stared down impassively, separating the saved from the damned; cleansed of soot, the scene was a good deal clearer than at the time of the previous conclave, when Karol Wojtyla was elected pope on the eighth ballot.

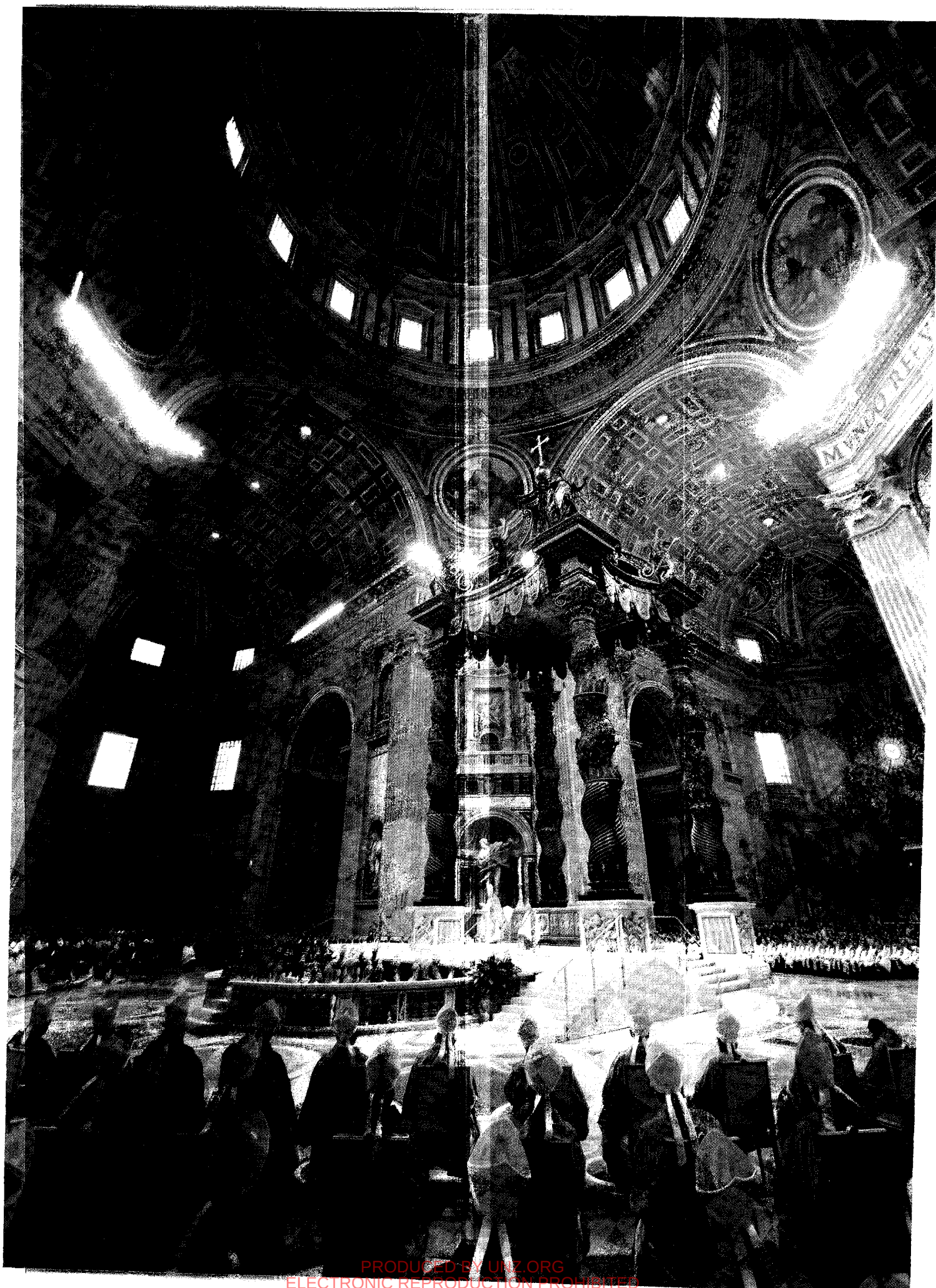
The cardinals left the chapel, boarded the minibuses, and were taken to the Santa Marta for lunch—all except Cardinal Walter Kasper of Germany, who went on foot through the lush Vatican gardens. Was Ratzinger unbeatable? No; but his hour seemed to have come.

In the refectory Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo of Colombia buttonholed other cardinals, especially those from Latin America. An ardent supporter of Ratzinger, he urged them to consider the tally for Bergoglio. A vote for

the Argentine was not really the vote of regional solidarity they might think, he said. Many of the votes for Bergoglio were probably coming from scandal-ridden North Americans or from Western Europeans whose flocks could fit onto the head of a pin. Coffee was served. The cardinals boarded the minibuses once more.

Paul Elie, a senior editor at Farrar Straus & Giroux, is the author of The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage, which won the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for First Nonfiction, among other prizes.

JERRY LAMPEN/REUTERS/CORBIS



The chapel doors were locked for a fourth scrutiny. The cardinals strode to the front of the room one by one. This time two dozen votes went to Bergoglio. More than eighty went to Ratzinger. The prefect had been elected pope. The ballots were burned in the chapel furnace. Smoke guttered up gray and then white. The bells of St. Peter's tolled, setting off a ringing of bells across Rome. A text message—"*fumata bianca*"—was forwarded from one mobile phone to the next, and tens of thousands of people in the city hastened to the square to see the new pope, whoever he was.

It was just past 6:00 P.M. in Rome when Cardinal Jorge Arturo Medina Estévez, a Chilean, emerged on the loggia over the big central doors of St. Peter's and declared, "*Habemus papam*"—"We have a pope." He then pronounced a string of Latin words with a surname at the end: Ratzinger.

Several hundred commentators, watching from the square or on television monitors, began to tell a story of Ratzinger as an unlikely pope and a surprising choice—a shy scholar summoned from his study against his will to lead the world's billion or more Catholics along a path trodden dramatically by his outsize predecessor.

The new pope appeared on the loggia, freshly vested in red, white, and gold, a white skullcap on his head. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—priest, theologian, author, doctrinal

by making a series of strong interventions in the Vatican's internal affairs, largely out of sight of the press and the vast Catholic populace, but very much in the gaze of the people who elect popes.

Like several million other people, I was in Rome last spring, as the papacy passed from one man to another. The experience combined reportage and pilgrimage. I went into the basilica to pay my respects to John Paul, joining the swollen stream of mourners who filed past the body, forbidden by the security guards to pause, much less to pray, and so left to salute the dead pope with a click of upraised camera phones. I arranged meetings with priests and Vatican officials I'd come to know over the years. In suit and tie I watched from a seat atop Bernini's colonnade as Cardinal Ratzinger celebrated the funeral mass, delivering a deeply affecting eulogy to "our beloved pope," while the wooden coffin containing John Paul's body lay spectacularly alone beneath the Roman sky. At a bus stop I took a snapshot of a poster pasted to an old stone wall, as it had been pasted all over Rome: John Paul on his knees and gazing heavenward, and below him the word GRAZIE, "Thank you."

When he was elected, in 1978—the so-called "year of three popes"—John Paul, fifty-eight, was the youngest pope in modern history. When he died, at eighty-four, he seemed

Did Ratzinger want to be pope? Certainly—provided that God and the other cardinals wanted this. More and more, it seemed, he was wanted. He did not wait for John Paul to die; he prayed and then stepped in.

supervisor, Vatican insider—was now Pope Benedict XVI, the vicar of Christ, the servant of the servants of God. He beamed and raised his arms to the sky. He looked happy, proud, nervous, awestruck—but in no way surprised.

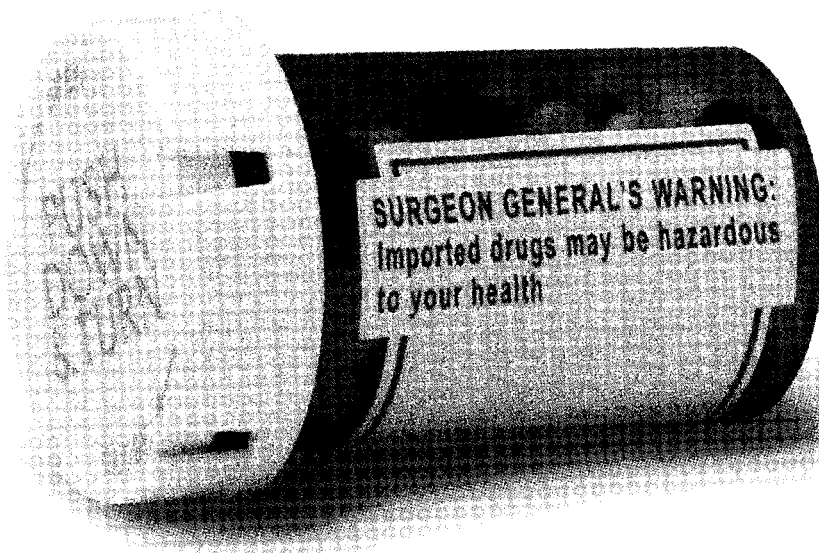
This is the story of how Joseph Ratzinger took hold of the papacy, and of what his accession means for the Church today. It is the story of a man "inwardly seized by Christianity" (as he once wrote), seen preparing to seize the moment, putting human ambition in the service of supra-human demands. It is a story of power and its exercise, though not in the usual pejorative sense. Ratzinger's stern stewardship of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had led the press to dub him "Ratzweiler"—and to luridly point out that the CDF was the successor to the Inquisition. But Ratzinger was at once more and less than an inquisitor. On the one hand, he was a crack theologian reduced to vetting Vatican documents; on the other, he was an intellectual with portfolio, speaking truth *from* power rather than to it.

Ratzinger had no need to grasp for the keys of St. Peter's. As John Paul's most trusted associate he didn't have to pull rank or trade favors to make his influence felt. Rather, he drew near to the papal office by degrees. Over a period of years he laid claim to the role of leader of the Church

beyond age, like a biblical patriarch. In the obituaries the early photographs showing his strong jaw and straight back came as a shock; it was hard to remember that he had ever walked normally, much less skied or stood up to the Soviets. Parkinson's disease, a hip replacement, fatigue, and old age had ravaged him more profoundly than the public knew.

"They treat him as though he were already dead," it had been said of the aging Pope Paul VI, who died already out of favor among the clerics who run the Vatican. It was vastly different for John Paul. The longer he lived, the greater the reverence for him grew at the Vatican. The more he suffered, the more Christlike he was seen to be. The less capable he became of doing the routine work of the papacy, the more confident his subordinates were that he was a saint in their midst.

The events of the twelve months from the onset of John Paul's last illness up to the present—a year of two popes—complete a process that has been under way since the turn of the millennium. John Paul's poor health prompted Ratzinger, always confident of the soundness of his own approach, to speak and act more boldly than ever. John Paul's physical weakness made Ratzinger (seven years younger) seem spry and vigorous beneath his head of white hair; John Paul's thick, clotted speech made Ratzinger's



Would we really want this?

We've all seen stories about Americans ordering foreign drugs over the Internet, looking for bargains. So has U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona. He's warned that those Americans are taking very real safety risks. Now, proposed bills in Congress would push the idea of foreign drugs even further by legalizing their importation from certain countries into the U.S. Dr. Carmona has led a task force to investigate and reports that importation "would increase

the opportunity for counterfeit and other substandard drugs to enter and be dispersed into the U.S. drug distribution system." He knows what he's talking about: The World Health Organization estimates 10% of the global drug supply to be counterfeit. And our own U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns that it'll be overwhelmed by an avalanche of incoming drugs. Do we all really want to be at risk this way? We invite you to find out more and answer that for yourself.

To learn more about drug importation, visit www.fda.gov/importeddrugs



Source: Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S. Testimony Before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, United States Senate, February 16, 2005. U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing "Drug Importation," 108th Congress, 2nd Session, July 14, 2004. World Health Organization estimates, as reported in Interpol Media Release dated May 25, 2004, announcing the First Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting, May 25-26, 2004. Health and Human Services Task Force on Drug Importation. Report on Prescription Drug Importation. December 2004.

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gentle enunciations seem the voice of clarity. John Paul's struggle to carry on despite his ailments precluded the notion that Ratzinger's own limitations—advanced age, a divisive public image, an attraction to thoughts more than to thinkers—were drawbacks in any important sense.

Did Ratzinger want to be pope? Certainly—provided that this was what God and the other cardinals wanted of him. More and more, it seemed, he was wanted. Beginning in 2000 circumstances at the Vatican seemed to call Ratzinger to the papacy—to “convert” him or turn him around to the office, as he would put it. He saw the papacy diminished by the pope's illness, and the Church weakened by scandals. He was clearly “head and shoulders above the rest of the cardinals,” one of his aides told me, “and he knew it”; he at once recognized his mastery of the mechanisms of Vatican power and trusted himself to use them properly. He did not—dared not—wait for John Paul to die; the Church was going off course again. So he prayed for guidance and then stepped in.

The deep roots of Benedict's pontificate were hard to see in the glare of media coverage surrounding the funeral and conclave. Once the foreign press left town, however, the *silenzio* at the Vatican slackened considerably. That is when I returned to Rome for a stay that stretched into midsummer. With the new pope meeting rabbis and mullahs, and with

Four men were especially forthcoming. As is common at the Vatican, they spoke with the understanding that they would not be named. I'll give them pseudonyms.

Matthew is a scholar who has known Ratzinger for forty years, a man who balances his admiration for the new pope with the skepticism of one who has just seen a professional peer acclaimed as God's vicar on earth. Mark is a controversialist, a man in the public eye who knows the new pope well—but not as well as he knew John Paul. Luke is a monk who was called to Rome for his literary gifts; although he does not know “Benedetto” the way some of his friends do, he can quote him chapter and verse. John, trained in theology, was brought into contact with Ratzinger through curial service; he knows the new pope through firsthand observation and direct interaction.

I was a little awed to be breaking bread with people who knew the pope when—who had taken his classes, drafted his documents, carried out his directives, shaken his hand without pomp and circumstance. But such workaday relationships are where his true life is lived. Whereas John Paul seemed most at home when celebrating mass for 100,000 strangers, Benedict is most himself when among fellow churchmen in Rome. Whereas John Paul made all the world an altar, Benedict's sphere of action is the compound of churches and

Wojtyla seemed born to wear white; Ratzinger seemed most himself in a black cassock and beret. John Paul traveled the world; Ratzinger made a ritual of his daily walk from office to apartment.

Vatican City's license plate SCV1 taken off John Paul's bulletproof popemobile and placed on Benedict's open-topped Mercedes-Benz, I found that people at the Vatican—cardinals and archbishops, curial officials and theologians—were eager to talk. We would meet in the sitting rooms of the curial offices along the Via della Conciliazione, the broad, sterile boulevard leading up to St. Peter's. These are neo-Baroque salons furnished with chairs like those found in the lobby of a Hilton, beneath high ceilings that make their occupants look small. I would take a seat under a stylized portrait of John Paul (sometimes Rembrandt, sometimes Norman Rockwell) and eventually a young man would rise from behind an old computer, leave the room, and return with a cardinal or a bishop. Or we would meet for lunch in a trattoria in central Rome. As the pasta turned rubbery in the midday heat, and the meal was prolonged by espresso and sweets, the distance between the Vatican and everyday Rome would seem to lengthen, until we spoke of “il Vaticano” as the different country it purports to be.

My interlocutors told me how Ratzinger deliberately took charge as John Paul faltered, and described what Ratzinger hadn't liked about John Paul's approach to the papacy. They provided the commentary that made it possible to form a clear picture of the conclave.

offices surrounding St. Peter's. As a symbol of the papacy John Paul's popemobile has been replaced by Benedict's personal theological library of several thousand books, which were photographed after his election so that they could be reshelfed in the same order in the papal apartments.

In short, Mr. Outside has been succeeded by Mr. Inside; and the story of Ratzinger's emergence as the Church's leader reveals the ways in which his pontificate is likely to affect the Church as a whole. In many ways the central fact of the papacy in the modern age is the gap between the pope's growing power in the Church and his diminishing influence on the religious lives of individual believers. This gap is one that John Paul and his predecessors sought to close. Under Benedict the gap is open—wide open. He will govern more but matter less than John Paul—and will probably matter less to the lives of individual Catholics than any other pope of the past half century.

II. CO-WORKERS IN THE TRUTH

A postcard for sale in Rome shows John Paul and Joseph Ratzinger together many years ago. John Paul is wearing the white papal vestments and an embroidered miter, Ratzinger robes of red and gold. They are facing each other in profile, their hands on each other's

shoulders, John Paul's strong gaze and stony forehead opposite Ratzinger's softer features and thick white hair, their eyes locked and alight with joy. It is a friendly, even a fraternal, embrace, but the impression is somewhat misleading: the picture was taken at the mass in October of 1978 at which John Paul was "invested" as pope, and the embrace was a ritual show of fealty, performed that day by each of a hundred cardinals who stood in line to honor him.

"Friends" is how the two men are usually described, but even now the nature of the friendship is hard to pin down. It is more revealing, I think, to see them the way they saw themselves—as "co-workers in the truth," a New Testament expression that Ratzinger made his motto when he became an archbishop.

In the 1960s both men took part in the Second Vatican Council—Karol Wojtyła as a young prelate from Kraków, Ratzinger as an adviser to the archbishop of Cologne—and

the more prominent of the two. Wojtyła was a charismatic prelate immersed in the Church's struggles in cut-off Poland; Ratzinger was a well-known theologian across Europe. After Vatican II, Ratzinger had taught at the University of Tübingen, a kind of Institute for Advanced Study of Catholic thought. He had been a founder of *Concilium*, the most prominent journal to emerge from Vatican II, and then of *Communio*, a more conservative journal established out of disaffection with an overly progressive reading of the council's texts—particularly *Gaudium et Spes*, Wojtyła's key text, whose openness to modernity Ratzinger judged "unsatisfactory." Ratzinger's *Introduction to Christianity* had become a standard work in Catholic seminaries. "I read it in my first year as a monk, and it was not about liberal or conservative, Vatican II or the reaction to Vatican II," my friend Luke told me, fetching a battered paperback copy from a high shelf in his cell as if to evoke a more innocent time. "It was about belief itself. I

thought, 'Now, here is a writer who knows what it is to be a Christian—who knows what it might mean to me personally to commit my life to Christ and the Church.'"

Ratzinger's support of Wojtyła for pope, then, was no simple act of deference to a cardinal older and more magnetic than himself. It was a placing of his gifts in the service of a man who was in many ways still a question mark—but who would emerge in the short term as greater than he.

There was no surprise in John Paul's appointment of Ratzinger as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in 1981. John Paul had made clear that his pontificate would seek to right the listing ship of the Church by putting forth a conservative interpretation of Vatican II, and in Ratzinger he had both a top theologian and one even more conservative than himself.

It was John Paul's practice to choose bishops according to orthodoxy, pure and simple, even if it meant disregarding more worldly indicators of talent or achievement. Matthew, the scholar, believes that in other circumstances John Paul's suspicion of strong thinkers might have led him to pass over Ratzinger. "What if Döpfner [Cardinal Julius Döpfner, Ratzinger's predecessor in Munich] hadn't died young, allowing for Ratzinger to be named archbishop by Paul VI?" Matthew said. "What if Ratzinger was still an academic theologian when John Paul was elected pope? Would John Paul have ever made him an archbishop? I doubt it." Once Ratzinger was in Rome, though, "John Paul could see that he knew more than anybody else, and so made heavy use of him," Matthew told me. "Then, because of the poor quality of John Paul's episcopal appointments, Ratzinger stood out even more among the bishops, and John Paul leaned on him even more."



Cardinal Ratzinger with Pope John Paul II

10 · 03

the Vatican II connection is the source of much of their subsequent authority. But although their contributions to Vatican II are beyond dispute—Ratzinger's to *Dei Verbum*, a document about the sources of revelation, and Wojtyła's to *Gaudium et Spes*, about the Church's approach to the modern world—they did not become acquainted during the four years of the council. According to Ratzinger, they never even met there. It was not until 1977 that the new archbishop of Munich-Freising met the archbishop of Kraków, and it was not until the two papal conclaves of 1978 that they got to know each other.

The first of those conclaves elected the Italian cardinal Albino Luciani—John Paul I—as the successor to Paul VI. Luciani died of heart failure a month later. In the second conclave Ratzinger was quick to join a coalition led by Franz König of Vienna, proposing Karol Wojtyła as the next pope.

Though younger than Wojtyła, Ratzinger at the time was

For the next two decades he and John Paul represented the Vatican to the world from their offices on opposite sides of St. Peter's. While John Paul received bishops or drafted encyclicals from his desk in the papal apartments, Ratzinger supervised the CDF's thirty experts from behind the gated iron fence of the Palazzo Sant' Uffizio, scrutinizing forthcoming Vatican documents as well as the work of suspect theologians. Sometimes the prefect would correct the pope's theology; when John Paul seemed to declare the restriction of the ordained ministry to men an infallible teaching, for example, Ratzinger, though no supporter of a more open priesthood, made clear that this was not permissible.

Their Tuesday lunches and Friday-evening meetings became fixed points in the turning world of John Paul's pontificate. Describing these appointments a few years ago, Ratzinger made himself and John Paul seem relative equals, though in different roles. "We shake hands, sit down together at the table, and have a little personal chat that doesn't have anything to do with theology per se. Normally I then present what I want to say, the Pope asks whatever questions he has, and this starts another conversation going." He dispelled the idea that they were in lockstep; there were differences—about ecumenism, for example—within an "inner harmony." At the same time,

Polish nationalism, sought truth in history—the dying arc of communism, the end of the second millennium—Ratzinger sees the challenges of the Church as finally theological, not historical. In his view, human society is always changing; civilization is entropically prone to decline. It is the task of theologians to make the substance of the Catholic faith clear amid this continual change, not to make it relevant to their place and time. This explains his distaste for such innovators as the liberation theologians of Latin America.

Inspired by the providential strain of Polish Catholicism, John Paul read back into his earlier life the signs that he was destined to become pope and to lead the Church into the third millennium. Ratzinger, in contrast, is nearly an existentialist in his view of the Christian life as a series of decisive actions for or against God. His life, his books, and his tenure at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith all bear the imprint of such an outlook. A policeman's son, he moved to the head of the class through devotion to his studies. A gifted young German in a generation thinned by war, he grew up expecting to serve as a leader in the Church in his country. Educated in the shadow of great theologians—the Protestants Karl Barth and Rudolph Bultmann, the Catholics Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar—he came of age convinced that theologians could guide the Church and change the world,

At Montecassino in 2000 Ratzinger sat for a book-length interview. He referred to John Paul only a dozen times, and at one point to John Paul's pontificate in the past tense. It is a startling moment.

he dismissed the notion that he was the architect of John Paul's thought: "I've had a say in the Pope's official teaching and contributed something that has also given shape to the pontificate. But the Pope has very much his own course."

Over time the differences between the two men became clearer. They could be seen as complementary types. Wojtyla was an actor, Ratzinger a writer. Wojtyla seemed born to wear white, whereas Ratzinger seemed most natural in a black cassock and beret. John Paul traveled the world on a never-ending pilgrimage; Ratzinger made a ritual of the daily walk from his office to his apartment in a drab modern building in the cramped and tourist-ridden neighborhood just outside the Vatican walls, literally in the shadow of the papal apartments. He would stop en route to buy light bulbs, feed stray cats, pose for a snapshot with some tourists, or browse in the window of the Ancora bookshop, where new works of theology were displayed alongside treacherous portraits of John Paul. Once home he would drink a glass of Orangina and settle at the piano, playing Mozart from six-thirty to seven each evening, and then read or write into the night.

If John Paul's outlook was defined by his nationality, Ratzinger's is best understood through his vocation. He is a theologian the way John Paul was a Pole: wholly, intensely, at once proud and embattled. Whereas John Paul, formed by

and the theologically rich work of Vatican II emboldened him further. Once established as a theologian, he emphatically asserted his position against those who sought to blunt the sharp edges of Christian truth with the idea that the progressive forces of history were on their side.

He acted decisively, finally, through his service to John Paul. He was John the Baptist to the older man, making straight the path for the arrival of a figure whose sandals, as Scripture would have it, he was not fit to untie.

At the far end of John Paul's long pontificate the pattern was turned around. Now John Paul, for all he had done, was bent double by illness, while Ratzinger, though past retirement age, was invigorated by the challenges placed before him. Now John Paul became the lesser man and Ratzinger the greater.

III. NOT SO FAST, WOJTYLA

In February of 2000 Ratzinger left Rome to spend a long weekend at the Benedictine abbey at Montecassino, a ninety-minute drive away. The abbey, which dates back to the sixth century, is the motherhouse of the order of monks founded by Saint Benedict, the architect of Western monasticism. During World War II the Nazis—turning the monastery's prestige and hilltop location into strategic advan-

tages—made Montecassino into a staging ground, but the Allies bombed it anyway, almost destroying the complex.

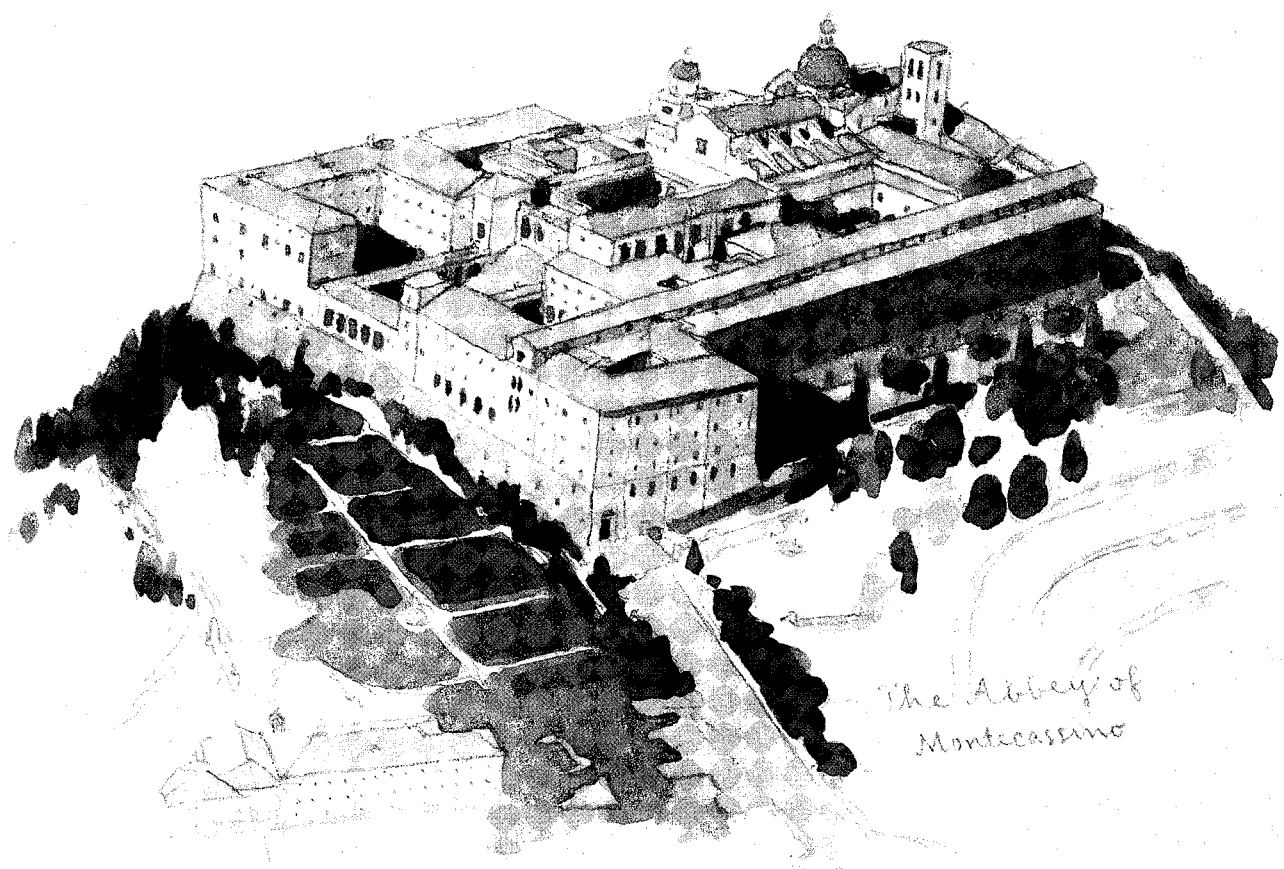
This double history of exaltation and destruction, of divinity and depravity, makes Montecassino a formidable place for reflection. Ratzinger's objective on this visit was something other than peace and quiet, however. A journalist was with him. At Montecassino in 2000 Ratzinger would sit for a book-length interview, talking for three days straight.

Two previous books of interviews had defined him as both John Paul's brilliant sidekick and a man with his own distinctive voice. With its bright-red cover and tabloid-style title, *The Ratzinger Report* (1985) suggested that some intrepid journalist had found a breach in the Inquisitor's

much as a kind of physician treating "the pathology of faith."

The Ratzinger Report was a big seller in Italy, and Ratzinger followed with *Salt of the Earth* (1997), the best expression of his point of view. This time the interviewer was the German journalist Peter Seewald, and Ratzinger's voice, even in translation, sounds out across the pages: at once gentle and forceful, now lofty in its impersonality, now candid, even intimate. The book made Ratzinger, and by extension the Vatican, seem surprisingly humble and open to criticism.

Now, at Montecassino, Ratzinger sat down with Seewald again. He said little about doctrine in the sense of the formulae of faith. Rather, he spoke in plain language about what Catholics believe. "When it comes down to it, every-



silence. In fact Ratzinger had carefully vetted the text (written by the Italian essayist Vittorio Messori), and it seemed crafted to counter the image of him as a fearsome reactionary. Certainly he was dogmatic: "It is not the Christians who oppose the world," he declared, "but rather the world which opposes itself to them when the truth about God, about Christ and about man is proclaimed." But his account of the conflict between Catholicism and modernity was eloquent and forward-looking. He was no throwback but a "realist" who simply thought that the reforms that followed Vatican II went beyond what the council fathers had called for. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was not a new Inquisition but an institution charged with "the defense of right belief." As prefect he was not an enforcer so

one has to undergo his own Exodus," he explained. "He not only has to leave the place that nurtured him and become independent, but has to come out of his own reserved self. He must leave himself behind, transcend his own limits; only then will he reach the Promised Land, so to speak."

In the previous interviews Ratzinger had cited John Paul continually and spontaneously. This time he referred to John Paul only a dozen times in three days, and rather distantly at that, calling him "the pope," "this pope," "the present pope," or "the Holy Father." At one point he even referred to John Paul's pontificate in the past tense: "It was occupied in dealing with all the basic questions of our time—and over and beyond this, it gave us a running start, a real lead." It is a startling moment. ("He really said that?"

my friend John asked in astonishment.) Ratzinger's "us" no longer included Wojtyła, and John Paul's long pontificate was a thing of the past; Ratzinger was looking beyond John Paul to the Church's next stage.

John Paul was still alive and still pope, however, and as if to emphasize the point, he had made dramatic plans for 2000—plans that placed him at the center from start to finish. According to a long tradition, the fiftieth and the last years of a century are Jubilee years, in which the Church settles old debts and starts anew, urging the faithful to come to Rome on pilgrimage. Throughout his pontificate John Paul had looked forward to the Great Jubilee of 2000, seeing the advent of the third millennium as a chance for the Church to purify itself from within and at the same time to advance its standing in the world. "Everything had to get the Jubilee spin," one Vatican official told me. "It was a little much."

John Paul's schedule for the first six months of 2000 included trips to Mount Sinai, in Egypt, where in the Bible God speaks to Moses from the burning bush; to Jerusalem, where he would visit the Western Wall and the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial; and to Fatima, in Portugal, where, according to popular devotion, the Virgin Mary appeared in visions to three peasant children in 1917. The Fatima visit meant a great deal to him, for it was Our Lady of Fatima, he believed, who had protected him when, on her feast day in 1981, he survived a gunman's attempt on his life.

John Paul saw the Jubilee festivities as the "hermeneutical key" to his pontificate. They presented complications, however. For one thing, they threatened to overwhelm him physically. Already his hands shook and his speech was slurred—the effects of Parkinson's disease (though this illness had yet to be acknowledged)—and he was still feeling the effects of hip-replacement surgery and of the removal of a giant tumor from his abdomen. At the Vatican his secretary, Stanisław Dziwisz, and the papal staff had found ways to cover for him: keeping meetings short, clearing blocks of time for him to rest before his trips, and delegating many decisions to the heads of the various Vatican departments, called dicasteries or congregations.

His public appearances could not be delegated, though, and the first Jubilee events weakened him to the point where his true condition could no longer be disguised. During a mass for the sick at St. Peter's in January of 2000 he was obviously one of the sick himself—his face sunk into his chest, a stream of saliva dribbling from his mouth. He was often in bed by six in the evening. Ratzinger had once cited a Scripture verse to the effect that John Paul knew what it was to be dressed by others. He knew what it was to be fed by others, too. An aide had to cut his meat for him and, taking hold of his shaking hand, guide the fork to his mouth.

The other complication of Jubilee 2000 was theological. John Paul was conservative but not cautious. Wary of innovation in others, he was himself inclined to make grand

symbolic gestures whose meaning was either ambiguous or just plain confusing.

That was what happened soon after John Paul, draped in a glittering cope (a vestment so ornate as to suggest both the biblical Joseph's coat of many colors and one of Liberace's getups), opened the "holy" door of St. Peter's to signal that the Great Jubilee had begun. The pope arranged to repeat the gesture at St. Paul's Outside the Walls, one of the four basilicas on the itinerary for Jubilee pilgrims. The basilica is set in a grassy area where the apostle Paul is said to have been buried—a favorite picnic ground for Roman families. It is often used as a setting for ecumenical services, so that the Vatican can ask other Christians to join in common prayer without, in effect, giving them the keys to St. Peter's.

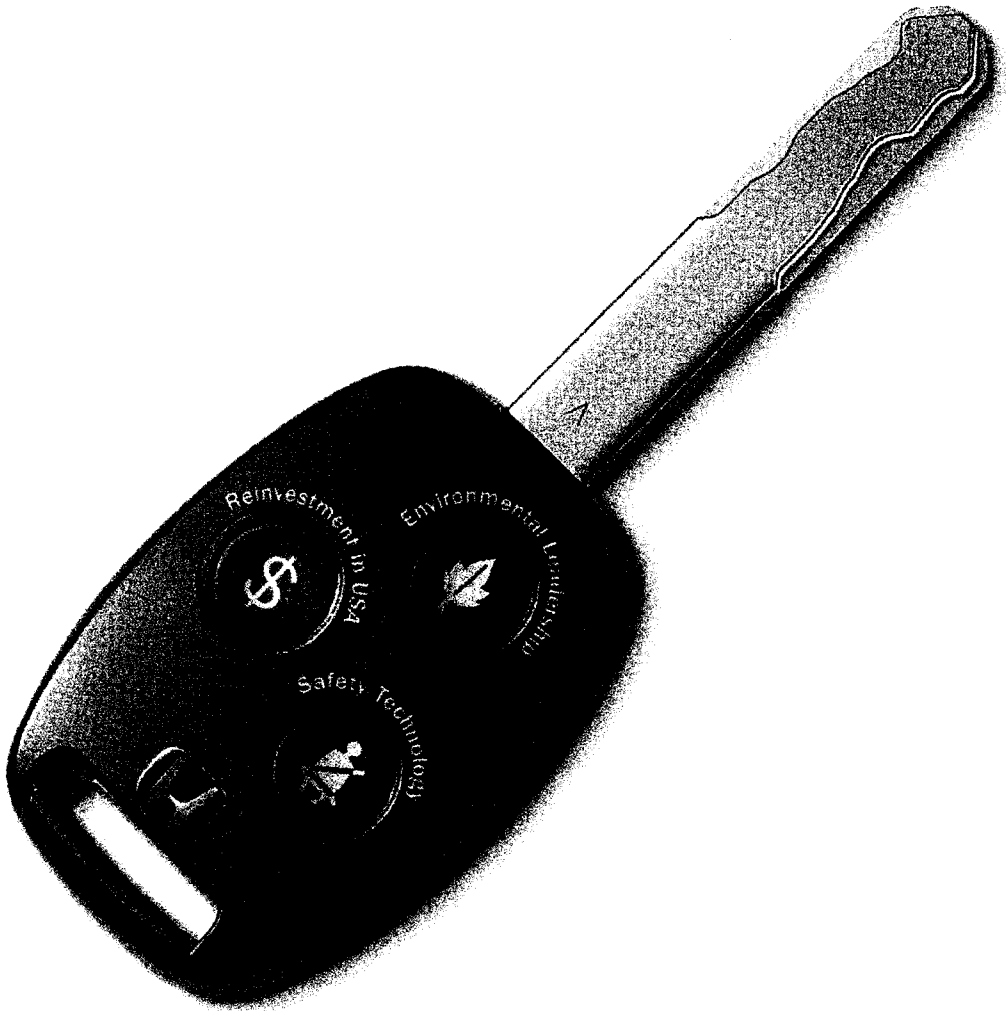
John Paul had invited George Carey, the archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion, to join him. The two leaders approached the holy door, each clad in cope and miter and carrying a crozier, the hooked walking stick that symbolizes the bishop's role as shepherd of the faithful. John Paul opened the door, and they strode through side by side.

John Paul would later single out the event as one that "has remained impressed upon my memory in a special way." But the episode made Cardinal Ratzinger uneasy, because strictly speaking the Catholic Church doesn't consider Anglican orders valid—meaning it doesn't consider Anglican priests priests or Anglican bishops bishops. In his view, a photo op at St. Paul's was no less significant than a high mass at St. Peter's, and a Sunday in the park with George Carey was no picnic. "Sometimes these ecumenical and inter-religious gestures were seen as suggesting something other than what was meant—and would be troubling to Ratzinger, who doesn't like ambiguity," Cardinal Avery Dulles, an American theologian, told me. "The opening of the holy door is an example of the sort of thing that makes him nervous. He would say, 'If we don't recognize Anglican orders but we treat them with all the honor of the episcopal office, then something is wrong here.'"

A week later the CDF held a meeting to summarize its recent work for the pope. With John Paul sitting before him, Ratzinger called "special attention" to the complexities of ecumenical and inter-religious matters in the Jubilee year. He told John Paul that the belief in the "salvific uniqueness and universality of Christ and the Church" risked being obscured by "erroneous and confused ideas and opinions." In other words, the Church had to make sure to stress its own central role as the bearer of the Christian message.

Speaking from a prepared text, John Paul replied to Ratzinger, agreeing that "our ardent desire to arrive one day at full communion" with other churches "must not darken the truth that the Church of Christ is not an utopia, to be reassembled from present existing fragments with our human forces." The grim lyricism of the reply (echoing a Ratzinger gibe about "the 'laboratories' in which Utopia is distilled") suggests that

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it was actually written by Ratzinger—that the pope’s concession to the prefect was scripted by the prefect.

“During the Jubilee, Ratzinger was counterbalancing the pope,” a man long in Rome as the head of his religious order explained. “In some ways he was resisting the pope, in some ways he was restraining the pope, in some ways he was responding to an inclination of the pope to the dramatic. John Paul thought in terms of big gestures—like going to the Wailing Wall. The trouble with a gesture is that anybody can put their own interpretation on it.”

My friend Matthew, the scholar, made the same point more sharply, arguing that sometimes the Vatican departments actively worked against the pope. “Some of the stuff coming out of the dicasteries actually seemed to undermine what John Paul was trying to do,” he told me. “John Paul was a phenomenologist, interested in the whole range of experience. Take a look at *Redemptor Hominis* [his first encyclical letter]: he must use the word *experience* a dozen times. He talked about experience, he relied on it, he never had any inhibition about it—and yet they censored him. You could see other people correcting him, checking him.” In particular Matthew saw the hand of his old colleague Ratzinger, holding tight to the pope’s wrist.

March 12, 2000, the first Sunday of Lent, was the Jubilee’s day of “memory and reconciliation.” “Let us forgive and ask forgiveness! ... We cannot fail to recognize the infidelities to the Gospel committed by some of our brethren, especially in the second millennium,” John Paul declared from behind the lectern at St. Peter’s. Then, one by one, seven archbishops rose, lit candles, and asked forgiveness for offenses against other Christians, against Jews, against native peoples, against women, against “the little ones.” As the prefect of the CDF, Cardinal Ratzinger rose and asked forgiveness for offenses against truth. At his behest, the language of all these pleas had been crafted so that it was clear the cardinals were seeking pardon from God, not from special-interest groups, and confessing the sins of Catholics, not of the Church. Nevertheless, the moment was dramatic, even by John Paul’s standards. *The New York Times* called it an “unprecedented moment in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.”

Later the same day John Paul resumed writing his spiritual testament, which he had been composing in installments since 1979. In it he mused on death, made provision for his burial (which he envisioned in Kraków, not Rome), and described his gratitude for the “gifts” in his life: Vatican II, the end of communism, the failure of the assassination attempt, and a long papacy. He likened himself to Simeon in Luke’s gospel, an old man who sees the child Jesus and declares that he is now ready to die.

Joseph Ratzinger, too, was surveying his life and times. Before coming to Rome to run the CDF he had gained John Paul’s assurance that he would be free to keep writing as

a theologian, and he reserved the early mornings for “personal work” in his apartment before crossing the square to the Palazzo Sant’ Uffizio.

Now Ratzinger bore down on an essay of real consequence: a preface to a new edition of *Introduction to Christianity*, his most admired book. Based on a series of lectures he gave to large audiences at Tübingen in 1967, the book is evidence that he is no stranger to unbelief—that despite his strict Catholic upbringing and constant faith he knows unbelief from the inside. In long, learned chapters he marries the searching orthodoxy of the great preconiliar theologians to a modern existentialist’s concern for what can be called the situation of the unbeliever. Belief in our time, he proposes, is formed in the crucible of unbelief, and unbelief is formed in defiance of the yearning to believe. The unbeliever is the believer’s secret sharer, and vice versa.

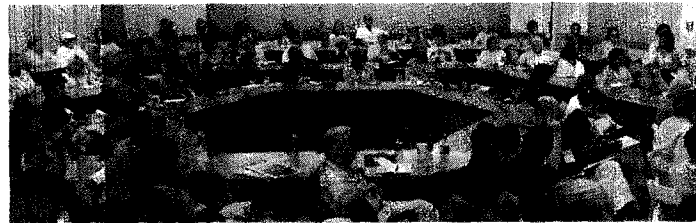
Ratzinger prefaced the new edition by telling a story about the course Christianity had taken since the book came out. He focused on two dates: 1989 and 1968. Upon the fall of communism, in 1989, he argued, Christianity had “failed to make itself heard as an epoch-making alternative.” It failed, he suggested, because it had failed earlier, in 1968, when it became captive to Marxist ideas of revolution, which obscured the truth of the Gospel. This was clearest in liberation theology, which promised to free the poor peoples of Latin America but instead left them with no true alternative to dictatorships, only the theories of Marx-addled professors.

Ratzinger went on to describe the ill effects of Western society’s loss of faith. Cut off from God, he warned, humanity flounders, even though at first “everything apparently goes on as before.” Technology makes the human person into an object rather than a subject. Crime flourishes in a climate of relativism and self-aggrandizement. In time civilization comes apart. “Without God,” he declared, “nothing is safe.”

In many ways Ratzinger was making a standard argument for religion as the basis for civil society. But the preface’s difference in tone from the book it introduced was striking. Gone was Ratzinger’s solicitude toward the unbeliever. Unbelief, once the shadow side of the human yearning for God, was now an outgrowth of noxious social forces. Where John Paul saw the forty years just past as a time of gifts, Ratzinger saw them as a time of despair. Where John Paul was soldiering on despite his ailments, Ratzinger in his study was a professor grown impatient with his students’ lack of understanding.

That September Ratzinger held a press conference to release the document *Dominus Iesus*, which the CDF had begun to prepare after his warning to John Paul. It concerned the Catholic Church’s relations with other religions, and in approach it was graceless. Contrary to Vatican procedure, the CDF pushed it through without giving key curial officials the chance to sign off on it, and Ratzinger himself signed the document on August 6, as Rome was emptying for the summer holidays. In a sharp departure

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from Vatican II, it treated other Christian denominations as essentially equivalent to non-Christian religions—implying that Christian faith that is not Catholic is not Christian faith at all. And it used wounding words, declaring that the other churches and other religions—the religions whose leaders John Paul was going out of his way to greet during the Jubilee—were “in a gravely deficient situation.”

“We all had a lot of explaining to do,” Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, the archbishop of Westminster, told me. “If Cardinal Cassidy’s office [the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] had seen it, they never would have let it go out. Cassidy would have gone to John Paul and said, ‘You can’t do this.’”

In particular, Bishop Walter Kasper, then the secretary of the council, challenged the document. The day after the Vatican announced that Kasper was to be elevated to cardinal—a sign that he was likely to succeed Cardinal Cassidy as the head of the office—an Austrian magazine published an interview in which Kasper found fault with the document’s “doctrinaire” tone and its “clumsy and ambiguous” treatment of other Christian bodies. The prefect of the CDF was not pleased. “The closest I’ve ever seen Ratzinger to pissed was over Kasper’s response to *Dominus Iesus*,” Mark told me. “We were in his office, just the two of us, and it came up. Now, ‘pissed’ for Ratzinger—I’m not sure ‘pissed’ is quite the word. ‘Pissed’ for him is a raised eyebrow and a roll of the eyes. But he was pissed. The eyebrow was raised. The eyes rolled. ‘That is nonsense,’ he said—and that, from him, is the equivalent of an outright condemnation from somebody else.”

If Ratzinger’s intention with *Dominus Iesus* was to wave a red flag, he was successful. From its title onward it served to cast aspersions on the Jubilee road show, as some in the Vatican called it, and to make Ratzinger more prominent than ever as John Paul’s alter ego, a cleric who was more Catholic than the pope.

IV. SENIOR MOMENTS

Seventy-five is the retirement age for Catholic bishops, and as Ratzinger’s seventy-fifth birthday drew near—April 16, 2002—the word from Rome was that retirement would suit him just fine. In a letter to John Paul (who was about to turn eighty-two) he offered his resignation as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Ratzinger’s resignation was not accepted, however. It was no time for the doctrinal prefect to step down. The papal schedule for 2002 rivaled that for 2000—as if, having survived the Jubilee road show, John Paul was determined to extend its run indefinitely. There were the canonizations of nine saints, ranging from Juan Diego of Mexico to the little-known Pauline of the Heart of Jesus in Agony, keeping up a pace of saint-making that had led Ratzinger to suggest that John Paul was canonizing profligately. There were three foreign trips, including a triumphal return to Poland. The scandal of priestly sexual abuse in the United States

had reached a point of crisis. And John Paul’s Parkinson’s disease had become common knowledge.

Meanwhile, another Vatican official was ailing. This was Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, a native of Benin and the dean of the College of Cardinals, a largely honorific role with one definite responsibility: that of directing the cardinals during a papal conclave.

Gantin would turn eighty in May of 2002. As his birthday approached, he made known his wish to resign as dean and go back to Benin. He had sought to resign twice before. This time his resignation was accepted. In late November the six cardinal bishops (one of three groups within the College of Cardinals) met to elect a new dean from among themselves. They chose Ratzinger, who had been the vice-dean. John Paul affirmed the choice.

In some respects it was hardly unusual that the vice-dean would succeed the dean. But several people in Rome told me that the election of Ratzinger rather than Angelo Sodano, the secretary of state, resolved a conflict among the cardinals in ways that came to bear directly on the conclave.

John Allen, the Vatican correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*, has called Gantin the “inadvertent architect” of Ratzinger’s election as pope, and characterized the change in deans as “perhaps the single most decisive moment in the chain of events” leading up to the conclave. He expanded on these remarks over lunch at his favorite *ristorante* in the Borgo Pio. As an ashtray was brought out, in defiance of Italian law but in deference to his taste for Nat Sherman cigarettes, he explained the situation. “With Gantin stepping down, there are only two logical choices for the new dean”—Ratzinger and Sodano, who is seven months younger. “But too many people at that level dislike Sodano. The feeling is that he is what the Italians call *gonfiato*—he has an inflated sense of himself. So it would have to be Ratzinger. Certainly Ratzinger would have been aware of this—and with a conclave in the offing, he would have seen the implications of getting elected dean sooner rather than later.”

Did Gantin step aside so that Ratzinger could run the conclave? My conversation partners in Rome would say only that Ratzinger and Gantin have been allies ever since they were elevated to cardinal on the same day in 1977. “That Gantin should be succeeded by Ratzinger is something you should give real attention,” I was told by a Vatican official who has worked with both men. “Here are two men from backgrounds as different as can be imagined: one a European to the core, the other said to be descended from African tribal royalty. Each is called to Rome by John Paul and serves loyally for twenty years as the head of a congregation—the two that you hear called the ‘major’ congregations. Each asks to retire and return to his homeland several times. And when, on his third request, Gantin’s resignation is accepted, Ratzinger, with whom he had worked so closely, is elected to succeed him. Surely there is something to this.”

Ratzinger was a natural next dean: a senior man, under

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eighty, and relatively healthy. His election put him front and center in the planning for the Church's future. It put him in place as the celebrant of the funeral mass for John Paul when the time came. It gave him responsibility for eulogizing the dead pope and setting John Paul's long pontificate in context for future generations.

Election as dean also enabled him to take a strong position on one of his key issues: the priority of the Church's doctrinal or teaching dimension—represented by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation of Bishops—over the political dimension, represented by the Secretariat of State. This distinction, which might seem at first glance to be religious hairsplitting, is fundamental around the Vatican. "For Cardinal Ratzinger it's a theological issue," my friend John, the curial official who has had many dealings with Ratzinger, told me. "As a living entity, acting in the world and in history, the Vatican has to have a state which has diplomatic relations with other states. Cardinal Ratzinger doesn't question this. But it's his view that the Vatican state isn't part of the essential nature of the Church as it has come down to us from the apostles. It's not biblical, and theologically its relationship to the Church as a whole is somewhat ambiguous."

We were speaking on the Monday after John Paul's

Five months later Ratzinger looks on fretfully as John Paul, propped up by a lectern, seems about to topple over under the weight of the miter on his head. By early 2004 Ratzinger is caring for John Paul, looking out for him: as he proffers a giant crucifix for John Paul to kiss, he might be extending to the bent and wrinkled pope a means of support.

My friend John remembers clearly the first time he thought that Ratzinger would become pope. It was during a grand mass on October 16, 2003, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of John Paul's election. The mass was held in St. Peter's Square at twilight, so as to recall the evening in 1978 when Karol Wojtyla stepped out onto the central loggia of the basilica and introduced himself to the world as the new pope "from a far country." But the effect was to suggest the twilight of his pontificate. After several hundred cardinals and archbishops strode in procession to an altar outside St. Peter's, John Paul was rolled out on a special conveyance, a cross between a throne and a wheelchair that was now his principal means of getting around in public. Then Ratzinger gave a stirring encomium to his great co-worker. He likened John Paul to Paul the apostle, who also had "tirelessly traveled the world" and had suffered bodily at the end of his life. It was then, as the standing Ratzinger addressed John Paul, who was slumped in his chair, that

"He is in a bad way—we should pray for the pope," Ratzinger had told some pilgrims. Once, the pope sat through a meeting with the new archbishop of Canterbury apparently without knowing who he was.

funeral, two weeks before the conclave. John explained that the distinction between the Vatican's congregations, such as the CDF, and its other departments was at the root of a long struggle between Ratzinger and Sodano—a struggle that would most likely be played out in the conclave. "The people over at State are terrified that he will wind up pope," he told me, speaking of Ratzinger. "He thinks they're perfectly entitled to do their job, which is to vigorously represent and uphold the Vatican's diplomatic presence. But to represent the Church as a whole? To lead the Church? Not a chance."

Ratzinger himself had come to be recognized as a leader of the Church, and not just at the Vatican. Though his public image was unappealing, he was the only cardinal most ordinary Catholics would recognize. His pronouncements—about same-sex marriage, the United Nations, Catholic politicians, or Turkey's bid to join the European Union—were reported around the world as the statements of the pope's second-in-command. A series of photographs of the two men suggests a shift in their relationship as John Paul's health went into steep decline. At the altar of St. Peter's on Easter in 2002 prefect and pope are collaborators, bowing their heads together over the bread and wine.

John felt Ratzinger would be the one. "I can't give you a reason why I thought this. I just remember sitting there, watching and listening to him, and suddenly it hit me: He could be pope. He may be pope."

Avery Dulles took part in that mass, and what he remembers is how sick John Paul was. "The Gospel reading was the passage in which Jesus tells the apostles to 'feed my sheep,'" Dulles recalled, "and in his homily it was almost as if John Paul was asking us, 'Have I fed your sheep? Have I fed you?'" But even though he was reading from a prepared text, John Paul couldn't make it through the homily. He stumbled over words, gasped for air, and struggled to keep his eyes open and on the text. An aide had to help him by reading the very passage in which he asked the faithful to help the pope.

"He is in a bad way—we should pray for the pope," Ratzinger had told some German pilgrims a few weeks earlier. There was ample evidence of a turn for the worse. John Paul had faltered before a huge crowd during an open-air mass in Slovakia—"and everybody who was there was afraid he wouldn't make it back to Rome alive," Mark recalled. He fell asleep during an audience with the president of East Timor. He sat through a meeting with the new archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, apparently without knowing who Williams was.

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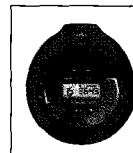
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The combination of John Paul's worsening health and his propensity for pageantry created a blockage in the daily operations of the Vatican. The problem of a senescent or debilitated pope was not a new one. In the months before his death, in 1958, Pius XII struggled with a case of the hiccups so severe he could scarcely breathe. Paul VI stopped traveling seven years before he died. But the problem was compounded in John Paul's case by his strained relationship with the curia, the 1,500 or so people who carry out the work of the Vatican. "John Paul was just a terrible administrator," as Mark, known to all as an ardent admirer of John Paul's, told me. Even at his physical peak he had always been indifferent to the operations of the Vatican bureaucracy; now he was barely capable of keeping track of them.

"The Vatican was being run by a few key people," one curial official told me in the sitting room of an otherwise deserted Vatican department late one afternoon. With the *administrative staff gone, this official had come to the top of the high staircase and opened the big door himself, his Roman collar loosened in the summer heat. I asked him who those key people were. Some Italians and some Poles, he explained. They would work out the appointments of bishops and curial officials among themselves, trading candidates ("I give you one of yours, and you give me one of*

lem in his diocese. "The archbishop traveled to Rome, coming from a very long distance, and went to the papal apartments. Less than an hour after the appointed time I received a call saying he was at the portineria downstairs. I was afraid that something had gone wrong—that I had not prepared him properly. I went down and found the archbishop very upset, nearly apoplectic. He asked if we could take the conversation to my office so that no one would hear him in this state. So we came upstairs, and he sat right there where you are sitting now and told me what had happened. First of all, he was not pleased to see that the pope's private secretary would take part in the meeting. He began to explain the matter that concerned him to the pope. After only a few minutes the private secretary addressed the pope and indicated, 'I can take care of this.' The pope shook his head, and the archbishop continued. Only a few more minutes later the private secretary made the gesture again: 'I can take care of this.' This time the pope nodded yes. At that point the archbishop rose, collected his case, and said to the secretary, 'I have not come all this way to discuss this matter with you, but with the Holy Father!' He went out of the papal apartments and down to the street, without shaking Dziwisz's hand."

As John Paul's meetings grew more ritualized, Ratzinger made his own meetings with the bishops more substantive.

Ratzinger's advocate among the English-speaking cardinals—his "campaign manager," as one insider calls him—was George Pell, a large, blunt, colorful Australian who wears a bush hat with his clerical garb.

mine"), with the result that often an Italian and an Eastern European would be appointed together.

"Ratzinger wasn't one of those people—he wasn't a person John Paul would pick up the phone and ask about an appointment," the curial official said. "He never wanted to be the kingmaker in the Congregation of Bishops and get his people appointed. He preferred to stay within his competency, which was doctrine." Yet for Ratzinger doctrine was the competency of competencies. Through the CDF he made sure that doctrine bore on every aspect of the Church. He didn't even have to leave his office to take a position. He let prospective allies come to him.

This was most obvious in the *ad limina* visits, in which the world's nearly 5,000 bishops come at five-year intervals for face-to-face meetings with the pope, followed by meetings at the CDF and other Vatican departments. The tempo of everyday life in Rome is set by these visits. But poor health had made it hard for John Paul to receive the bishops—several dozen in some weeks—and had reduced those receptions he did have to pro forma affairs, often consisting of little more than a handshake and a blessing.

A curial official who has been in Rome since Vatican II became greatly agitated as he told me the story of one archbishop's visit, specially scheduled because of an urgent prob-

Men long in service to the Church had been meeting with him during their *ad liminas* since the early 1980s. A number of them told me that the Ratzinger they met on their most recent visits seemed more alive and engaged than before. "In December [2004], when I made my *ad limina* visit, I became even more impressed by his warmth and his listening presence," Harry J. Flynn, the archbishop of Minneapolis-St. Paul, told me. His ten-minute meeting with John Paul, in the company of eleven other bishops from Minnesota and the Dakotas, was followed by a much longer meeting with Ratzinger at the Palazzo Sant' Uffizio, and the contrast between pope and prefect struck him powerfully. "The Holy Father was quite ill—he had weakened considerably in the last years," Flynn recalled. "Cardinal Ratzinger really stood out from the times I'd seen him before, though I can't say that I understand why. He greeted us warmly and individually, looking right into our eyes. Then he sat us down and asked, 'Now, how can we help you?' He was curious about the challenges facing the Church in the United States and in our individual dioceses. He had a beautiful peace about him, and gave the sense that here is a person who truly values my opinion." As they left the palazzo, Flynn turned to the other bishops and, as he remembers it, "expressed the hope that Ratzinger would be elected pope when the time came."

Inevitably, John Paul's failing health called forth prognostication about who the next pope would be. The favorite *papabili*—the press's favorites, at any rate—were Dionigi Tettamanzi of Milan, Cláudio Hummes of Brazil, and Francis Arinze of Nigeria. Ratzinger was sometimes mentioned as a “kingmaker” or a “compromise” candidate. In truth, though, his candidacy was by then well advanced, and several people of influence were actively trying to bring his election about.

Three cardinals took the lead. A protégé of Ratzinger's, Christoph Schönborn, the archbishop of Vienna, called on the cardinals—many of them from Eastern Europe—who could be considered Ratzinger's base. Alfonso López Trujillo, a Colombian who is the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, worked on the Spanish-speaking cardinals; he and Ratzinger had been allies since the early 1980s, when



Ratzinger, the new CDF prefect, and Trujillo, the new archbishop of Medellín, had suppressed liberation theology.

Ratzinger's advocate among the English-speakers was George Pell, the archbishop of Sydney. Although little known outside Australia, Pell had served for ten years as an adviser to the CDF, and had been named by John Paul to head Vox Clara, a Vatican working group charged with refreshing the language of the liturgy in English. My friend Mark, the controversialist, confidently referred to Pell as “Ratzinger's campaign manager,” though he quickly added, “not at Ratzinger's instigation.” He recalled how, over dinner one night, Pell had waxed eloquent to him about all the qualities that would make Ratzinger an ideal pope. “He was so over-the-top enthusiastic that at first I said to myself, ‘He must want something out of it.’ What he wanted, I decided, was to be named prefect of the CDF if Ratzinger was elected.” But

when Mark saw Pell's enthusiasm for his work as archbishop in Sydney, he changed his mind. “I decided that he didn't want anything in particular out of it. He did it because he was convinced that Ratzinger was the man for the job—and because that's the kind of person he is.”

Pell is a large, blunt, colorful Australian who wears a bush hat with his clerical garb to ward off the sunshine, and he plays the role of ecclesiastical outrider to the hilt. One day after the conclave, over *caffè granita* in Trastevere, I asked him about his efforts for Ratzinger. He said, “How can I be the campaign manager when there are no candidates and no campaign? Who am I going to influence—the other two cardinals from Oceania?” He chuckled dismissively, but denied nothing.

V. JOHN PAUL'S LAST YEAR

Was John Paul even aware of the jousting for position taking place outside the papal apartments? For years he had joked that he had to read the papers to find out how sick he was. Now he had to follow the foreign news to find out what his closest associates were saying about the Church. A photograph from that time shows him slumped in front of a television set in the papal dining room, looking like any elderly shut-in.

His Friday meetings with Ratzinger continued. So did his foreign trips. In June of 2004—the day after George W. Bush, on the campaign trail, paid a visit to the papal apartments to give him a Presidential Medal of Freedom—John Paul went to the Swiss city of Bern. He might have been visiting the post-Christian future. Though linked to the Vatican through the Swiss Guards, who stand at attention outside St. Peter's, Switzerland is now a bastion of secularism in Europe. Its most prominent Catholic is one of Rome's fiercest critics: the theologian Hans Küng, a peer of Ratzinger's at Tübingen. Commenting on the Gospel passage in which Jesus raises a child from the dead, John Paul urged Swiss Catholics to rise again, to “welcome my invitation to get back up!” But the passage served to call attention to his own weakness.

Two months later he went to Lourdes—the shrine in southern France that has become a place of pilgrimage for sick people from all over the world. If Switzerland suggested the secular future, Lourdes—a site of neo-primitive folk devotion—represented Europe's Catholic past. Beforehand Vatican officials dismissed the idea that John Paul's visit to a place devoted to faith healing and miracle cures had any special significance. But while celebrating mass at the shrine's famous stone grotto the pope struggled to breathe, and in a murmured homily he acknowledged the obvious: that he was “a sick man among the sick.” After only twenty-four hours in Lourdes he returned to Rome.

The pope who had made 104 foreign trips was now largely restricted to the papal apartments: the corner bedroom, the office, the bathroom with its low tub, the library, the clunkily modern chapel.

His best times were spent with his closest friends, many of them Polish, around the big table in the dining room. The regular group included Stanislaw Rylko, of the Congregation for the Laity; Cardinal Marian Jaworski, once a fellow priest with John Paul in Poland, now the archbishop of Lviv, in Ukraine; and Edmund Szoka, once the archbishop of Detroit, who was called to Rome to run the Vatican state and was drawn into the papal circle because he speaks Polish. It had become customary for John Paul to have his Polish friends at his side during Christmas and Easter, the Church's great feast days. Now they were there all the time, and the mood was something other than festive. "It was very sad to see—his servant bending over and cutting his food for him, as for any elderly person," a Roman layman told me. He went on to recall the day when he and some colleagues from one of the Vatican's media offices climbed the stairs of the Apostolic Palace to celebrate a senior employee's retirement. As a going-away present, a reward for long service, the employee's colleagues had arranged to give her a party in the papal apartments, with the pope himself as a special guest. "He was practically lying down—it was horrible to see him slumped over among people it seemed he hardly knew," this man recalled.

A rumor emerged that at one of those meals in the papal

Justin Rigali of Philadelphia curtly replied, "What is gratuitously asserted is gratuitously denied"—a Roman way of saying that a rumor is a rumor. But another cardinal elector, to my surprise, readily assented to the idea that John Paul had someone other than Ratzinger in mind. "I don't think Ratzinger would have been John Paul's candidate—I think he would have wanted a younger man, one who could take the Gospel to the world the way he did," he told me. Rather coldly he added, "But of course John Paul had no vote in the conclave."

A year ago—in January of 2005—John Paul caught the flu and took a turn for the worse, one from which there would be no return. So long anticipated, his final decline was no surprise. The surprise was in the way his last days were presented by the Vatican—not in Catholic terms but in the terminology of modern medicine and the images of media-age drama.

He was taken by ambulance to the Gemelli Polyclinic, up a hill behind St. Peter's, on the night of February 1. In the weeks that followed, the Vatican spokesman, Joaquín Navarro-Valls, who has medical training, related the pope's health with the precision of a team doctor reporting on a sports star's condition. John Paul had been taken to the hos-

John Paul tried again to address the crowd in the square. Again he could not speak. He raised his right hand in a gesture that could have been a blessing, a farewell, an involuntary spasm.

apartments John Paul had addressed the matter of a successor. I heard an almost biblical account of a last supper with the disciples from my friend Mark, who was a regular at the pope's table over the years: John Paul summoned his Polish friends and told them that he knew he would not live long and that he could envision either of two men as his successor, making plain that he would prefer one over the other. Neither one was Joseph Ratzinger.

Meanwhile, Ratzinger's supporters had begun to pray for his candidacy—if, that is, the will of God was behind it. For ten years John Paul's death had been thought imminent. As 2004 drew to a close, these men hoped that the present state of suspension at the Vatican wouldn't last too long: the older John Paul got, the older Ratzinger got, and at some point he would simply seem too old to be elected pope. He might pass eighty and be kept out of the conclave. He might fall ill or lose his senses. He might die—for as John Paul liked to jest to friends who spoke of carrying on his legacy, "How do you know that I will die first?"

Did John Paul want a particular man to succeed him? Did he tell anybody? Asked these questions, most of the people I met at the Vatican refused even to begin to answer them. No one had anything to add to the legend of the last supper or knew what might have occurred there. Cardinal

pital because of "acute laryngeal tracheitis"—an inflammation of the larynx that made it hard for him to breathe or speak. He was receiving visitors and keeping up with Church affairs. He was back in the papal apartments, having returned in the popemobile along a route lit up by floodlights and the cameras of Italian state television, which broadcast the trip live. He was back in the hospital, this time with a flu "complicated by new episodes of acute respiratory insufficiency." This time it was serious. He could hardly breathe.

One night in late February a tracheotomy was performed. "What have they done to me?" John Paul wrote on a pad the next morning.

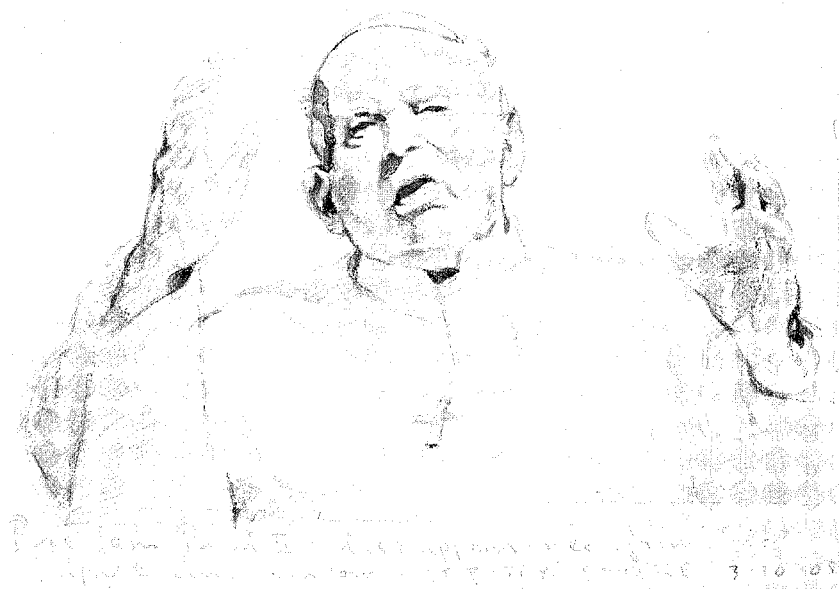
The same day, eulogizing the Catholic leader Luigi Giussani at the Duomo in Milan, Ratzinger evoked the plight of his ailing co-worker in Rome. "In the last period of his life, Father Giussani had to pass through the dark valley of sickness, of infirmity, of pain, of suffering," he told the congregation. "Now your dear friend Father Giussani has reached the other world ... The door of the Father's house has opened."

Two weeks later John Paul was again discharged from the Gemelli Polyclinic and returned to the Vatican, this time by minivan. Again his trip was broadcast live on television. A camera mounted in the back of the van showed his view of the approach to St. Peter's Square. It was an effect

at once dramatic and tactical, serving to keep the viewer's sights off the pope, who was pale and drawn.

The following Friday, Ratzinger addressed a conference held at the Vatican to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Vatican II document on the Church's relations with the modern world—a document that Karol Wojtyła had helped to shape. After the council Ratzinger had announced his displeasure with it; now he met the document halfway, praising the “beauty” of its account of the Church's role in promoting earthly justice while stressing the need to render justice to God first. Was he reconciling with John Paul or correcting John Paul? Probably both.

With the pope supposedly convalescing, the Vatican held out the prospect that he would lead the rites of Holy Week, as he had every year since 1979. As Holy Week approached, though, Navarro-Valls announced that five cardinals, including Ratzinger, would stand in for him.



On Good Friday, Ratzinger delivered fourteen meditations on the suffering of Christ and the shortcomings of Christians during the Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum. “Lord, your Church often seems like a boat about to sink, a boat taking in water on every side,” he lamented, denouncing “filth” in the priesthood, lack of faith throughout the Church, and a lack of vigor in Christian opposition to worldly ideologies. John Paul watched the proceedings on a big-screen TV set up in the chapel of the papal apartments. A camera had been brought in so that he could be shown on television clutching a crucifix.

It is not uncommon for cardinals to celebrate masses in the pope's stead, but the Easter *urbi et orbi* address is a pope's personal message “to the city and to the world.” This Easter the *urbi et orbi* was read out by Cardinal Sodano. Unable to appear on the loggia of St. Peter's, John Paul sought at least to greet the crowd in the square from his apartments. He was dressed in the white papal vestments, propped up in

his wheeled wooden chair, and rolled to an open window marked on the outside as the pope's by a piece of crimson cloth. A sheet of paper was placed on a Plexiglas lectern. With all eyes on him—the Vatican's cameras over his shoulder, looking out; the world's cameras outside, focused in—he tried to read, and then to speak, but he could not make a sound. He put his hand to his throat, as if to say that the words were there, or to indicate where the pain was.

Three days later he tried again to address the crowd in the square. Again he was wheeled to the window. Again he could not speak. He clutched the microphone. He held his mouth shut, even when it twisted into a frown. Then he raised his right hand in a gesture that could have been a blessing, a farewell, or an involuntary spasm, an expression beyond his control.

The end was near. Edmund Szoka, the American governor of Vatican City, recalled the pope's final hours for me last July.

We were in Szoka's office at the Governatorato, a large stone building set in the sculpted gardens behind St. Peter's. Several dozen framed photographs of Benedict XVI, in different shapes and sizes, were stacked in a hall, ready to replace the photographs of John Paul on the walls. Szoka, seventy-eight and nearly hairless under his cardinal's red biretta, proudly showed me a bookcase that contained the teachings and writings of John Paul—forty-plus volumes bound in red cloth—and nothing else.

“I got a call from Dziwisz in the morning, saying, ‘Can you come over?’” It was Friday, April 1. John Paul had celebrated mass at dawn and had followed a recitation of the Stations of the Cross.

He lay clad in a white dressing gown, an echo of his official vestments. His closest friends were there: Dziwisz and an aide, Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki; Stanislaw Rylko; three Polish nuns; and three doctors. “I knelt and kissed his hand,” Szoka said. “I said in Polish, ‘I am praying for you day and night.’ He was fully aware, though he could not speak. After a few moments I got up, and as a priest I am used to giving a blessing to sick people. So I gave him a blessing”—moving his right hand over the bedridden man in a sign of the cross—“and in reply he made the sign of the cross. And I thought, Who am I to give a blessing to the pope?”

John Paul had already been given the last rites, but he clung to life for a full day more. On Saturday tens of thousands of pilgrims made their way to St. Peter's Square. In the papal apartments the pope's intimates kept vigil as he slipped in and out of consciousness. Cardinal Sodano came to the bedside. John Paul's temperature spiked. As the afternoon turned into evening, the sound of the swelling crowd down in the square grew steadily louder in the

papal apartments. Stanislaw Dziwisz led the others in the celebration of mass. They sang hymns in Polish and the *Te Deum*, the Latin hymn of thanksgiving.

And then John Paul was dead. A candle was lit and placed at the foot of the bed, according to Polish custom. The time of death was recorded as 9:37 P.M. Navarro-Valls, with a hagiographer's instincts, would put out word that the dying pope had spoken of the faithful gathering in the square: "I have looked for you. Now you have come to me, and I thank you." The pope's chief doctor would report that John Paul had "passed away slowly, with pain and suffering," unable to "utter a single word."

Joseph Ratzinger did not take part in the deathbed vigil in the papal apartments. He was not even in Rome. After making a visit to John Paul's bedside at midday Friday (it was only his second visit in the eight weeks of the pope's illness), he left the city to go to the Benedictine monastery at Subiaco, an hour's drive north of Rome, where he was to receive the Premio San Benedetto—the Saint Benedict Prize for the promotion of life and the family in Europe.

Some of the people I met in Rome were appalled that Ratzinger had left the city. "Imagine it: the pope is dying, is nearly dead, and Ratzinger goes to Subiaco to pick up

uphold John Paul's legacy while keeping clear of the clanish folk who had encircled the dying pope. "That whole devotional aspect of the Polish mafia made him uncomfortable," my friend John told me. "He saw the cult of personality around John Paul as a big problem. And they knew it. Those Polish people knew that once John Paul was dead, it was all over for them."

As the pope lay dying, then, the prefect left town. He was driven to Subiaco in the usual car, a Mercedes sedan. A slim briefcase was on the seat beside him. He arrived, prayed vespers with the monks, and joined them in the refectory for a supper of soup, spaghetti, and Orangina. Before an audience of monks and local worthies he received the prize from the abbot. He gave a speech evoking "the city on the mountain" where Benedict of Nursia had gone on sojourn from Rome 1,500 years earlier—the place where, at a dark time for the Christian faith in Europe, he had "gathered together the forces from which a new world was formed." He likened Benedict's epoch to the present, "a time of dissipation and decadence" in which the world has lost its way. He suggested that the precepts of Benedict's monastic rule, as a distillation of Christian faith, "demonstrate also to us the path that leads to the heights, out of the crises and the ruins."

Joseph Ratzinger did not take part in the deathbed vigil. He was not even in Rome. With John Paul's death he would, in important ways, be on his own. More than ever he had things to do.

a pretty insignificant prize created by the abbot to get publicity for the monastery," Robert Mickens, the Rome correspondent for *The Tablet*, the English Catholic weekly, said to me. Others said the excursion was in character for Ratzinger, a man who keeps his appointments. "He told them he would go, so he went," Cardinal Szoka told me. "There is nothing unusual in it. The pope was very ill, but there was no knowing that he would not live on for days or even weeks." When I pointed out that the day Ratzinger left Rome, Szoka went on television to dispel rumors that the pope was already dead, Szoka simply said he hadn't realized Ratzinger had left town *that* day.

In character for Ratzinger, the visit to Subiaco was also characteristic of his relationship with John Paul. He had served the pope without ceasing but not without reservation; he had maintained a certain distance, for he was not a friend or a follower of Wojtyla so much as a co-worker in the truth. John Paul's illness had prompted him to stand apart more emphatically, to work the margins of the papal office. With John Paul's death he was, in important ways, on his own. More than ever he had things to do. As dean of the cardinals he had to prepare himself, practically and spiritually, for what was next: the funeral, the meetings of the cardinals, the conclave. As a presumptive pope he had to

Then he climbed into the waiting car and was carried off into the darkness. This was the significance of Joseph Ratzinger's trip to Subiaco that night last April: it put him, a Roman churchman par excellence, on the road to Rome once more, placing him among the pilgrims who would set out for the city in the hours to come in order to witness the funeral of one pope and the election of another.

VI. THE NINE DAYS

On Monday, April 4, John Paul's body was transferred from the Apostolic Palace to St. Peter's Basilica. In the two days since his death the body had been cleaned, clothed, and set out in a grand room for viewing by VIPs ranging from cardinals and heads of state to the flight crews from his foreign journeys. In those same two days the crowd of pilgrims had swollen to several million people. Now the body, strapped to a board, was carried into the crowd, as though into a mosh pit, while a double line of cardinals capped by Ratzinger and Sodano looked on—a triumph of the organized splendor for which the Church of Rome is legendary.

Four days later the body was carried into the square in a plain wooden coffin. In a silence broken only by the rotors of a surveillance helicopter the coffin was lowered onto a carpet.

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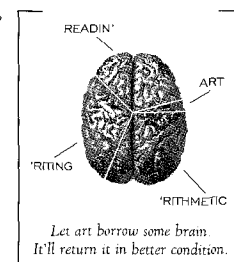
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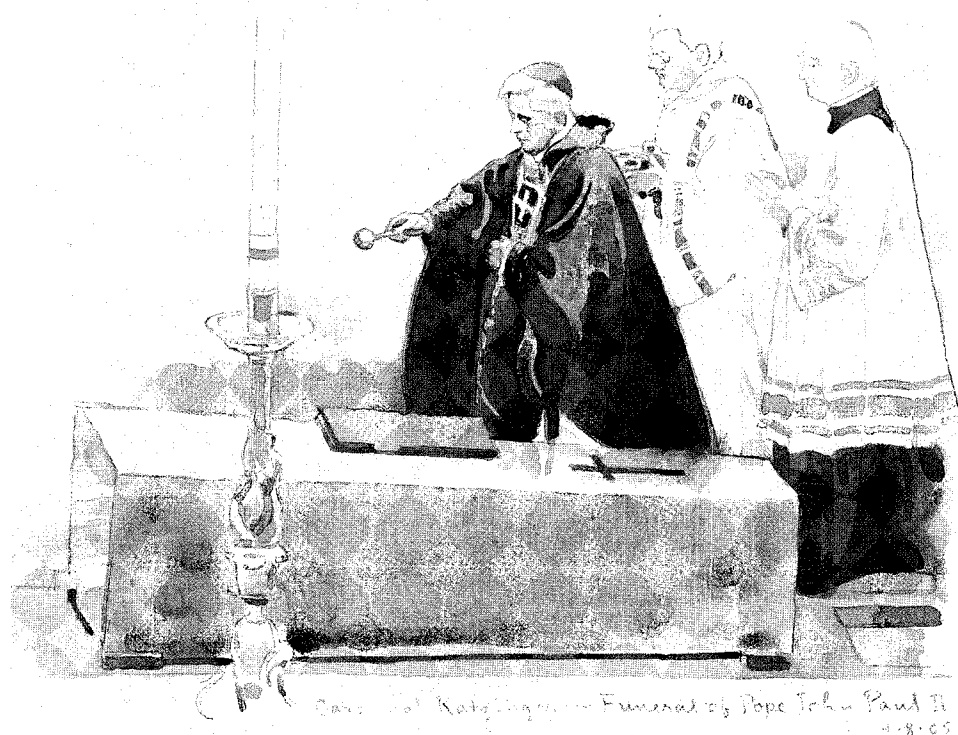
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A clergyman placed a slim book on top and opened it to a page marked with a red ribbon. For the next two hours, as Cardinal Ratzinger celebrated the mass of Christian burial and eulogized the dead pope, the coffin sat beneath the clear Mediterranean sky, a reminder that all the pomp, and the religion that gave rise to it, was finally concerned with the fate of a human soul after death.

From atop the right colonnade, where I was seated, Ratzinger looked like a pope in the making. His thick white hair made him appear more vigorous than the men behind him, most of them gray-haired or balding. His red robes whipped this way and that as he circled the altar. Most striking of all was his speaking voice, as he began the homily by extending a greeting, in delicate Italian, to his "*fratelli e sorelle*"—his brothers and sisters.



Cardinal Ratzinger at the Funeral of Pope John Paul II 4-8-05

"This is not the time to speak of the specific content of this rich pontificate," he said. Instead he sketched the outlines of John Paul's life in reference to Christ's exhortation to "follow me": youth, wartime, ordination, life as a bishop, and the calling to the papacy. In conclusion Ratzinger stepped out of his role as cardinal prefect and spoke as if for the whole Church and for the whole world watching. "None of us can ever forget how, in that last Easter Sunday of his life, the Holy Father, marked by suffering, came once more to the window of the Apostolic Palace and one last time gave his blessing," he told the crowd. "We can be sure that our beloved pope is standing today at the window of the Father's house, that he sees us and blesses us. Yes, bless us, Holy Father."

Some analysts have said that the homily got Ratzinger elected pope, by showing both the College of Cardinals and the public that the judgmental German could touch

people's hearts. But it can't have won over all the skeptics, at least not right away. For one thing, it was scarcely audible to much of the crowd. For another, it was given in Italian, a language foreign to many of the people whose minds it supposedly changed: the Polish pilgrims interrupting Ratzinger to wave banners demanding sainthood for John Paul; the press, which clamored for translations; the television audience, which encountered the homily through the commentary of the Anderson Coopers of the world; and a good number of the other cardinals.

An hour later the crowd fell silent as Ratzinger approached the coffin. So personal during the homily, now he was appealingly impersonal; and as he sprinkled holy water onto the coffin with a few flicks of his right hand, it was clear that the funeral had been transformed from a requiem for a pope into

the simple funeral mass offered many times a day in churches all over the world. It seemed uncommonly, authentically religious: at once grand and stark, celebratory and solemn, attentive to the invisible and yet finally oriented outward toward the lives of the people who were taking part in it. For a few moments—until the silence was broken by chants of "*Viva il papa!*"—John Paul was forgotten.

One evening after the funeral I went for supper with my friend Matthew, the scholar. When I arrived at the residence for priests of his order—not far from the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the gritty street that runs through central Rome—he had just finished taping a segment for a television newsmagazine. In a spotlight library full of video gear the anchor, a woman of fifty nipped and tucked

to look a decade younger, had asked my friend a series of questions. Now, with the priest out from under the lights, she read her questions into the camera again, improving her delivery—and inadvertently offering a synopsis of the questions being asked all over Rome. "What kinds of choices do the cardinals have to make?" Pause. "Is there lobbying?" Pause. "Is there politicking among the candidates?" Pause. "John Paul was criticized for being too harsh on issues like birth control, abortion, and homosexuality. Do you think the cardinals will be considering such issues?" Pause. "The issue of women in the priesthood: non-negotiable?" Pause. "How important is the challenge posed by Islam?" Long pause. "I'm not asking you to tip a winner, but are there obvious favorites? Could it be a dark horse?"

That morning I had met with Cardinal Dulles at the Jesuit headquarters in the Borgo Santo Spirito, an ancient



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road that runs to the left of St. Peter's. Dulles is the wise man among the American cardinals. A World War II veteran who converted to Catholicism while a student at Harvard, he was trained as a Jesuit priest while his father, John Foster Dulles, was serving as President Dwight D. Eisenhower's secretary of state. Born in 1918, he would have no vote in the conclave, which was restricted to cardinals younger than eighty, but he has always been a man worth listening to. He settled into a chair, hooked a cane over one arm of it, folded his long legs awkwardly, and offered a grim prognosis. "The breakdown of traditional societies and the indifference of modern people to religious faith have left us with a burden of re-evangelization," he explained. "People don't believe the Gospel because they don't know it, and they don't know it because they don't hear it. Even in the historically Catholic countries people are minimally Christian at best. Germany and the Low Countries give us no reason to be optimistic. Quebec is a desert. Ireland is very nearly lost to prosperity. Only Poland has never fallen away." What about the United States? "With our society's freedom of choice come our selfishness and competition, which are now being exported all over the world. We are not immune to the forces of secularization that are being felt in Europe. Is the Christian residue in America strong enough to resist them? I worry that it is not."

One cardinal assented to the idea that John Paul had someone other than Ratzinger in mind as his successor: "I think he would have wanted a younger man. But of course John Paul had no vote in the conclave."

Together these two episodes suggest the outlook in Rome in the *novemdiales*, the nine days of mourning from the funeral to the conclave. Public expectations for the conclave and the cardinals' preparations for it could hardly have been more different. The faithful and the press wondered about the prospects for momentous change in the Church, and imagined the dramatic ways the cardinals might bring it about: the politicking and coalition-building, the off-site lunches and after-hours tête-à-têtes, the favor-trading, the nods and whispered promises. "There are enough intrigues in Rome just now to fill a Dan Brown novel," one correspondent wrote. Meanwhile, the cardinals, taking part in the daily meetings called general congregations, sat in the modern audience hall tucked behind the Palazzo Sant' Uffizio and pondered the difficult situation of the Church in the twenty-first century. One cardinal after another would claim the rostrum and offer a commentary—about evangelization, secularism, ecumenism, episcopal collegiality, or the challenge of Islam. The meetings went on and on. "It was extremely disorganized at first," a man who knows many cardinals told me. "Then Ratzinger imposed order."

As dean Ratzinger supervised the general congregations—ruled over them, some would say. He greeted each cardinal by name and addressed him in a language famil-

iar to both of them—Italian, German, English, Spanish, or French. When some cardinals complained that the reliance on Italian as a *lingua franca* made things hard to follow, he had interpreters brought in. He saw to it that the cardinals who had not been heard from were invited to speak, and at the same time kept the windier cardinals from upsetting the schedule. He chatted to all and sundry during the coffee breaks—so different from the remote John Paul.

The closer Cardinal Ratzinger drew to the papacy, the more determined to oppose him certain cardinals grew. The story of the *novemdiales* is the story of the failure of moderates and progressives to unite in opposition. What went wrong? In the first days after the conclave his opponents in Rome laid the blame on the structure of the process. They complained that Ratzinger's role as dean, strengthened by his power as the doctrinal prefect, made him the lone voice of the Church more than was right. Moreover, they said, the protocol for the *novemdiales*, devised by John Paul and carried out by Ratzinger, prevented—practically forbade—an opposition from emerging. While it sounds conscientious that the cardinals spent two whole days reviewing the rules for the conclave, they said, the rules were already common knowledge, making the review of them a strategic waste of time on the part of the cardinal in charge. While it sounds

fair that each of the more than 150 cardinals, including those too old to vote, was allowed to speak for seven minutes in the congregations, the brevity of each man's remarks kept any one position from gaining traction—making the congregations the Vatican equivalent of open-mike night.

Even the cardinals' sleeping arrangements were blamed for the lack of effective opposition. Many cardinals had assumed that the Domus Santa Marta—built with the next conclave in mind—would be their residence during the run-up to the conclave. But as the cardinals were settling in Rome they were told that the Santa Marta would not be opened to them until the eve of the conclave. Until then they would stay in their usual Roman lodgings: at the North American College and other national seminaries, at the houses of their religious orders, or at hotels or in palazzi. Scattered thus, the cardinals didn't have a chance to meet informally, out of sight, and put their heads together.

I asked Cardinal Szoka, the Vatican's governor, why the cardinals weren't allowed to move in earlier. He pointed out that the Santa Marta's rooms had other occupants, mainly priests on long-term stays, who needed time to clear out, and that it had to be "swept" thoroughly to make sure no electronic bugging devices were present. The procedures meant to keep the cardinals' discussions

secret, then, actually kept discussions from taking place.

So did the collective romance with Carlo Maria Martini, which came to naught but led the more progressive cardinals to take their eyes off the prize. For years before the conclave reform-minded Catholics had put their hopes in Martini, the archbishop emeritus of Milan. Learned, experienced, and modern, yet an institutional man to the core; an Italian, a Jesuit, orthodox and yet open to the world outside the Church: he embodies the qualities that they envisioned in a successor to John Paul. The only problem was that Martini had received a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease, inviting the prospect of another pontificate ending in slurred speech and trembling hands. As he took a scholarly post in Jerusalem,

ings of the conclave secret, and for the most part really do remain tight-lipped, there is still no definitive information about what took place inside the Sistine Chapel. But an account that would explain the lack of a real challenge to Ratzinger might go like this.

At the core of the opposition was a group of moderates and progressives that included Cardinals Hummes of São Paulo, Rodríguez Maradiaga of Honduras, Mahony of Los Angeles, Danneels of Brussels, Dias of Bombay, Napier of Durban, South Africa, and Hamao, a Japanese curialist; the Germans Walter Kasper and Karl Lehmann; and as many as seven other North American cardinals. With Martini of Milan finally judged unelectable, these men settled their

hopes on another, very different Jesuit: Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Why Bergoglio? By all accounts he is unambitious and would not have sought the papacy openly. But his humility, together with other personal qualities, made him an attractive "bridge" candidate between progressive cardinals and moderate ones, between the Third World and the First. He is an Argentine but of Italian ancestry. As a Jesuit he is thought to be outside the grip of Rome, yet he serves as adviser to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and

so is a regular presence at the Vatican. Though trained as a chemist, he is considered an excellent theologian, and he is legendary for his simple and self-denying way of life: he lives in unadorned rooms near the cathedral in Buenos Aires and takes the bus to his appointments. As an Argentine he would have considerable appeal among the progressives, who have long sought a pope from Latin America, where nearly half the world's Catholics live; yet his emphasis on piety rather than social issues would make him acceptable to the moderates.

It is unclear which cardinals might have put Bergoglio forward as the anti-Ratzinger or assembled a coalition in his support. A curial official who has known Bergoglio for many years suggested that I look to Germany.

It was not an outlandish suggestion, for Walter Kasper



St. Peter's Square
The Vatican 4 05

rumors circulated that he had withdrawn himself from consideration. Even so, progressives seem to have had trouble letting go of Martini and settling on a more electable man.

All these factors doubtless complicated the efforts of cardinals to come together behind a candidate other than Ratzinger. But, finally, there is no tactical reason why the "so-called liberals" (as one Roman layman bitterly calls them) weren't able to fashion a response to the Ratzinger candidacy. After all, John Paul's death had not caught them by surprise. A conclave had been in the offing since 2000, if not longer. They had at least five years to prepare the ground—as much time as their idol John XXIII had to get elected, call a council, and see it through its first session before his death, in 1963.

Because the cardinals take a vow to keep the work-

had long shown himself willing to challenge Rome in general and Ratzinger in particular. Like Ratzinger, Kasper is a first-rank theologian who was brought into the episcopate. In his writing, and in his work as bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart and then with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, he had emerged as Ratzinger's moderate *doppelgänger*. He had supported a plan to allow Catholics who had remarried after a divorce to receive communion, drawing Ratzinger's censure. He had challenged Ratzinger's argument—in one of the prefect's "personal writings"—that the universal Church, represented by Rome, is "prior" to the local churches, represented by Catholic communities around the world, and the debate went on for months in the relatively open space of Catholic journals. His round figure and warm smile endeared him to the press, who mentioned him as one of the *papabili*, never failing to note his nickname, "Kasper the Friendly Cardinal."

With the conclave approaching, Kasper tested the limits of the *silenzio*, tilting at Ratzinger once more.

As Ratzinger had gone to Subiaco on the eve of John Paul's death, Kasper on the eve of the conclave went to the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere, half a mile from St. Peter's, the central place of worship of the Community of Sant' Egidio, a progressive Catholic movement based in Rome. Kasper's dispute with Ratzinger had gotten attention not only because it was a rare instance of two cardinals' disagreeing openly but also because it bore on the whole question of authority in the Church—which is to say, on the role of the pope. Kasper's argument for the "simultaneity" of the local Church and the universal Church was an argument for a degree of local autonomy. Ratzinger's argument for the priority of the universal Church was an argument for the priority of Rome and the pope.

Kasper took to the lectern in the ancient basilica, alongside a medieval icon of an all-seeing Christ. Alluding, it seems, both to the outpouring of enthusiasm for John Paul on the streets of Rome and to the support for Joseph Ratzinger among the cardinals, he remarked: "Just as it is forbidden to clone others, it is not possible to clone Pope John Paul II. Every pope ministers in his own way, according to the demands of his era." And then—addressing the other cardinals more than the lay people in the pews—he added pointedly: "Let's not search for someone who is too scared of doubt and secularity in the modern world."

But Cardinal Ratzinger, as dean, would have the last word. On Monday morning the College of Cardinals assembled at St. Peter's. The Domus Santa Marta had been swept for bugs and the cardinal electors had settled in. A few aides and clerical workers who would be needed in the chapel had been administered oaths of secrecy. Now, gathered under the great dome of the basilica, the cardinals listened to Ratzinger, who after two weeks of decisive action was nearly hoarse.

Ratzinger's homily is now known as the "dictatorship of relativism" speech, and with good reason. Within an eloquent and characteristic account of the gifts of faith and the sacred tasks of religious leaders he embedded a stinging denunciation of the Church's relations with the world—in which the Church, he suggested, quoting Saint Paul, is "tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery." He told the cardinals, "This description is very relevant today."

Some experts read the homily as the very opposite of a campaign speech, taking its toughness as proof that Ratzinger did not care to court popularity. Others saw it as Ratzinger's own warning to the cardinals, his way of making clear what they could expect if they elected him pope. It was certainly both these things. But it is most revealing as one more instance in which Ratzinger identified his



audience and then identified himself with them, with a rhetorical skill that our age calls political. Preaching to the vast crowd at John Paul's funeral, he had spoken as if he were one of them, just another pilgrim in the square; now, preaching to the cardinals on the threshold of the conclave, he exhorted them as a band of brothers, his fellow travelers on the storm-tossed ship of faith.

The homily was met with applause, and as the cardinals made their way in procession down the center aisle of the basilica an hour later, the applause rose from the congregation again, cresting at the sight of Cardinal Ratzinger, who brought up the rear. Who was being applauded—a departing cardinal or a presumptive pope? Whatever the case, as the cardinals climbed the grand staircase to the Sistine Chapel, the applause rang out as if the conclave were ending, not beginning.

VII. THE LONG-DISTANCE POPE

The night of his election, posters showing Benedict emerging on the loggia were pasted to walls throughout Rome. They joined the fraying posters of John Paul that clung tenaciously to the same walls, the image of the new pope's open arms appearing alongside a kneeling, smiling John Paul. In this way it was a time of two popes. "It seems I can feel his strong hand squeezing mine; I seem to see his smiling eyes and listen to his words, addressed to me especially at this moment: 'Do not be afraid!'" Benedict told the cardinals during a mass in the Sistine Chapel, and for a few days on the streets of Rome he and John Paul greeted passersby together.

That Sunday, April 24, Benedict XVI was invested as the 265th pope in a grand mass outside St. Peter's Basilica. Just enough had changed since John Paul's funeral to suggest something of a makeover in Vatican City. The new pope wore a new pair of gold-rimmed reading glasses. There were more German pilgrims than Poles in the crowd, waving flags as at a World Cup match. Jeb Bush led the U.S. delegation instead of George W. Up on the colonnade the protocol of press cards and assigned seating, thrilling three weeks earlier, now seemed routine, as if a new pope were installed every few years, not once in a quarter century.

The central fact of the papacy in the modern age is the gap between the pope's growing power in the Church and his diminishing influence on the religious lives of believers. Under Benedict the gap is wide open.

The popemobile rolled out to the strains of that most German of classics, Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor. The homily, though, was vintage Ratzinger: as he explained two symbols of the papacy—the ring on his right hand and the woolen pallium around his neck—the beauty of his words cloaked the severity of his vision, in which humanity is drowning in alienation, "in the salt waters of suffering and death," until we are rescued by Jesus Christ and the "fishers of men" who are his disciples.

In the months since then experts have sought evidence of a secret side to the new pope: an alternative to the forbidding stereotypes, a counterpoint to the exacting world view that he has developed over a lifetime. But there have been no great surprises. Benedict has exercised the papal office with the assurance of a man who put reflections on "the primacy of Peter" at the heart of his recent theology, and who watched a pope from close range for twenty-five years.

There is no doubt that under Benedict there will be some unexpected developments in the life of the Church. Yet to hope that the papacy will bring out some hidden side of its present occupant is to look for change in the wrong place, and to misunderstand both the man and the office.

Together John Paul II and Joseph Ratzinger carried out what Ratzinger declared the "authentic interpretation" of

Vatican II. As a result, in Rome today all the great Catholic controversies of the past half century—about women, sexuality, politics, and authority in the Church—are considered settled, and settled in the conservatives' favor. This gives Benedict a clear set of precedents and a staff of people who share his point of view. Yet it leaves him with less to do than the popes who preceded him. It means that his influence will most likely be felt more through his character than through his power to bring about change.

That itself is the change at the Vatican worth pondering, for Benedict's character places him at some remove from his predecessors. The popes of our era—John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, and John Paul II—were all worldly men. Even as they stressed that the pope is not popularly elected, they sought popular acclaim, a practice culminating in John Paul's foreign trips, which took the papacy to the people. And those popes could be seen reaching out and acting in ways that were meant to affect the lives of ordinary believers directly. Pope John summoned Vatican II, which changed the forms of everyday Catholic practice: the Latin mass, the meatless Friday. Paul formed a committee of experts to reconsider the Church's ban on artificial birth control, and when he upheld the ban over their recommendation, Catholic couples felt personally cheated

out of a papal blessing on their sexuality. Shortly before he was elected, Pope John Paul I, Albino Luciani, defying convention, sent warm greetings to the first child conceived through *in vitro* fertilization. Through his travels John Paul II brought moral theology into the park, the stadium, the living room, giving his reaffirmations of traditional Catholic stands the drama and urgency of front-page news.

In short, those popes were public figures. As such, they commanded the attention not only of the faithful but of all those who are still convinced that great personages shape events more than they are shaped by them. Like Nehru, or Margaret Thatcher, or Václav Havel, they were studies in human character, exhibits in the drama Edmund Wilson called "the writing and acting of history."

Benedict is different. He works with words more than gestures, challenging the world with an uncapped pen. Although he doesn't lack charisma, it is expressed on a small stage, in his writings and his one-on-one meetings with other churchmen. He is suspicious of popularity, and indeed of strong personality, whether in a pope or in an errant theologian. And although he has a very definite vision of the Church's role in worldly affairs, his emphasis is always on the Church as church. The most consequential actions of his pontificate so far have all involved ecclesial matters:

implementing a review of seminaries (which includes deterring gay seminarians); meeting formally with Orthodox, Muslim, and Jewish leaders; setting in motion the process for the canonization of John Paul; and naming John Paul's secretary the archbishop of Kraków. Even his dinner with an old foe, the progressive Hans Küng, was, after all, a meeting with a priest and a theologian like himself.

Surprisingly, given his authoritarian image, Benedict has a fairly restricted conception of the papacy, especially when compared with that of the maximalist John Paul. In his personal writings he explains it through the biblical imagery of the rock. Following tradition, he sees the papal office as at once "*petrus*," the rock on which the Church is founded, and "*skandalon*," the stumbling block. To these images he adds one from Michelangelo. In Benedict's view, change in the Church is brought about by what the sculptor called *ablatis*, or removal—"the removal of what is not really part of the sculpture." The Church is in need not of reform but of renewal, and the pope is less an agent of change than a sculptor helping it to attain its noble form.

The new pope's critics might say that this essentially negative approach to the office will make him a scourge bent on removing signs of life from the Church. So it may be. Or it may be that he will help to purify a Church that—as

lies to shape the Church's noble form in the United States: building schools and settling neighborhoods; furthering alliances between Church leaders and working people; establishing the Catholic Worker and other movements devoted to the least among us; tending to a flowering of *Catholic literature best represented by Thomas Merton and Flannery O'Connor*; and leaving Catholics free to find common ground with Jews, Protestants, and people of no religion at all.

At Subiaco on the eve of John Paul's death Ratzinger characterized Europe, for so long the cradle of Christianity, as essentially missionary territory, which stands in need of a new evangelization. True or not, it is an insight rich in implications for the United States, for it serves as a reminder that as far as religion is concerned, this country is part of the New World, not the old one. In the history of the Church the United States is not an imperial power but a developing country. Ours is a place where Christianity is still relatively new, and our folkways, so different from those of Europe, have long eluded easy understanding in Rome.

This puts Benedict at a certain disadvantage, especially when compared with John Paul II. Karol Wojtyła knew what it meant to be an outsider, and his visits here, for all their hortatory trappings, conveyed his relative openness to

Benedict is unschooled in the American experience, and one suspects that, at nearly seventy-nine, he is too far along to catch up on the work. The task of making sense of America will await some other pope.

the scandal of priestly sexual abuse made plain—is greatly in need of purification. In any case, his program as pope is a good deal narrower than John Paul's. The very fixity of the Vatican's doctrinal positions, together with his focus on Church matters above all, means that Benedict will play a more limited role in the life of the Catholic people than his predecessors did. The pope, for half a century as familiar as the parish priest, will once again be a fairly distant figure in Rome, a man from a far country.

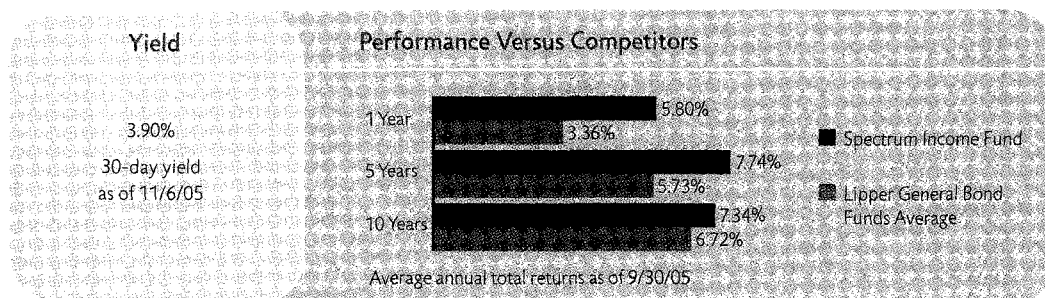
No one moved to deeper faith by the charisma of John XXIII or John Paul II can help feeling this change as a loss. Yet it is a change that offers certain possibilities for the lives of ordinary believers. Great things have happened under popes who were much sterner than Benedict and lacked his intelligence and sophistication. History suggests, too, that much of what is best in the Catholic tradition has arisen in the shadow of an essentially negative papacy, and much of what is worst has occurred when popes overplayed their role. Consider Pope Pius XII, the now vilified wartime pope. It was Pius's pretensions to be a statesman, not a fisher of men, that led him to calculate about the fate of European Jews rather than telling his Church to stand up and do the right thing. At the same time, Pius's relative indifference to American society left open spaces for American Catho-

American experience—an eagerness to walk our streets, see our sights, hear our song. In contrast, Benedict, for all his learning, remains unschooled in the American experience, and one suspects that, at nearly seventy-nine years old, he is too far along to catch up on the work. The task of making sense of America will await some other pope.

In the meantime, the question of who the next pope will be has been answered emphatically. For better and for worse, there is no question who Benedict is. The clarity of his world view will turn some Catholics away from the Church altogether. But his vision of Christian faith offers a challenge to the rest of us. It reminds us that the conflict between the Church and the modern outlook is not only over this or that issue but over the root questions of religious faith—about the existence of God and the ways God might be made manifest in our lives. It reminds us that even the pope must work with the Church as it actually is, not as he'd like it to be, and that he is likely to see his boldest projects founder or fail. With those points in mind we ought to turn away from the question of what the pope believes and consider just what it is that we believe—turning our attention away from Rome at long last and back to the world in which the real religious dramas of our time are taking place. ▀

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THE ANTHEM

If famous poets had written "The Star-Spangled Banner"

BY GARRISON KEILLOR

Illustration by Tim Bower

.....

Here on the shore of Baltimore observing the barrage of rockets and bombs from the man o' war,
The gunnery mates stripp'd to the waist and glistening with sweat,
Shouting each to the other and working together in close drill,
Ramming the powder charge and then the enormous projectile,
Each of them a man like myself and possessed of secret longings,
Each of them comely and well-appointed,
Especially the tall one on the left with black curls and taut abdominal muscles,
Who looks so long and lovingly at me, a stranger in big boots,
And I return his gaze—O aficionado, come, take my hand—
Leave your cannonading and we shall travel the open road
Where there are no banners except of affection and the love of dear comrades.

—WALT WHITMAN

The Banner—that we watched in Air
So Proudly as it Gleamed
Was Proven by the Rocket Glare
Or so to us it Seemed—

And so we waited for the Dawn
To see if it still flew
Or if—in Tatters—it is Gone—
As happened once—with You.

I woke up—at the Matin Bell—
A vast and empty Bed—
The Pillow bore—the slightest smell
Of Oil—from your Head.

A fleeting Phantasy—perhaps—
The Ghost of—Not To Be—
And Postmen—in their Crimson Caps—
Aim their Artillery.

—EMILY DICKINSON

Whose flag this is I think I know
His house is being bombed now though
He will not see that I have come
To watch the twilight's ebbing glow.

My little horse must think it dumb,
The cannons' pandemonium,
The rockets bursting in the air,
The sound of bugle, fife, and drum,

He turns and shakes his derrière
To show me that he doesn't care
Who takes this battle flag or why,
When in the redness of the glare

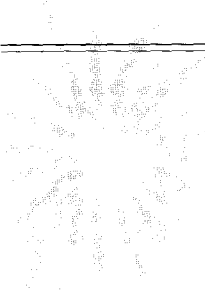
I see the banner flying high
Through the tumult in the sky
And, knowing all is now okay,
We walk away, my horse and I.

The flag is lovely, hip hooray,
But I have things to do today,
Some here and others far away,
Before I stop to hit the hay.

—ROBERT FROST

*Garrison Keillor is the host of
A Prairie Home Companion,
on public radio on Saturday nights.*





She being brand
New he threw
A flag over h
Er & began
The bombard
Ment & was soon
Rocketing
A (long) & feeling
Braveandfreeand(proudly)perilous
Can you see? Said he
Oui oui, said she
And it was love and it was
Spring and roses and it was
Dawn &
He
B
U
R
S
T
Into song.

—E. E. CUMMINGS

This is just to say
I have taken
The flag
That was
Flying

And which
You probably expected
To see
This morning

Forgive me
It was beautiful
So free
And so brave

—WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

On the ship, I sit and wait for the dawn
In the midst of the bombs and rockets and so forth,
A prisoner of these British marines who might shoot me,
You never know in a situation like this.

Like so many great moments in history,
You come upon it without meaning to.
You're a lawyer who goes to negotiate for the release of a prisoner
And voilà you become one yourself.

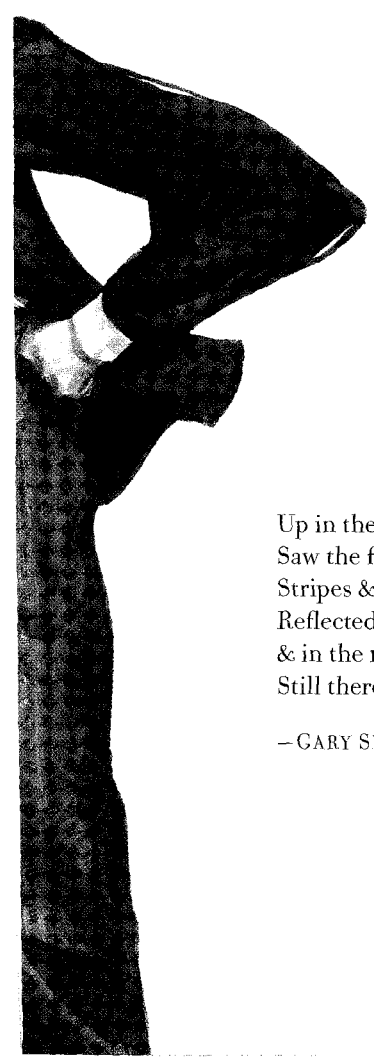
There is this incredibly perilous fight going on
And I suppose a person should be thinking about freedom
Or bravery but I must admit
I would give anything for a cup of coffee right now.

Like a Starbucks made by a girl in a striped blouse,
A latte streaming and gleaming.
But that seems less likely at the moment
Than Betsy Ross doing a striptease, stripe by stripe.

The graceful arc of the rockets, like Don
Larsen's curve ball for the Bronx Bombers.
He was a hero and then suddenly he was gone.
I wonder what's going to happen to that flag.

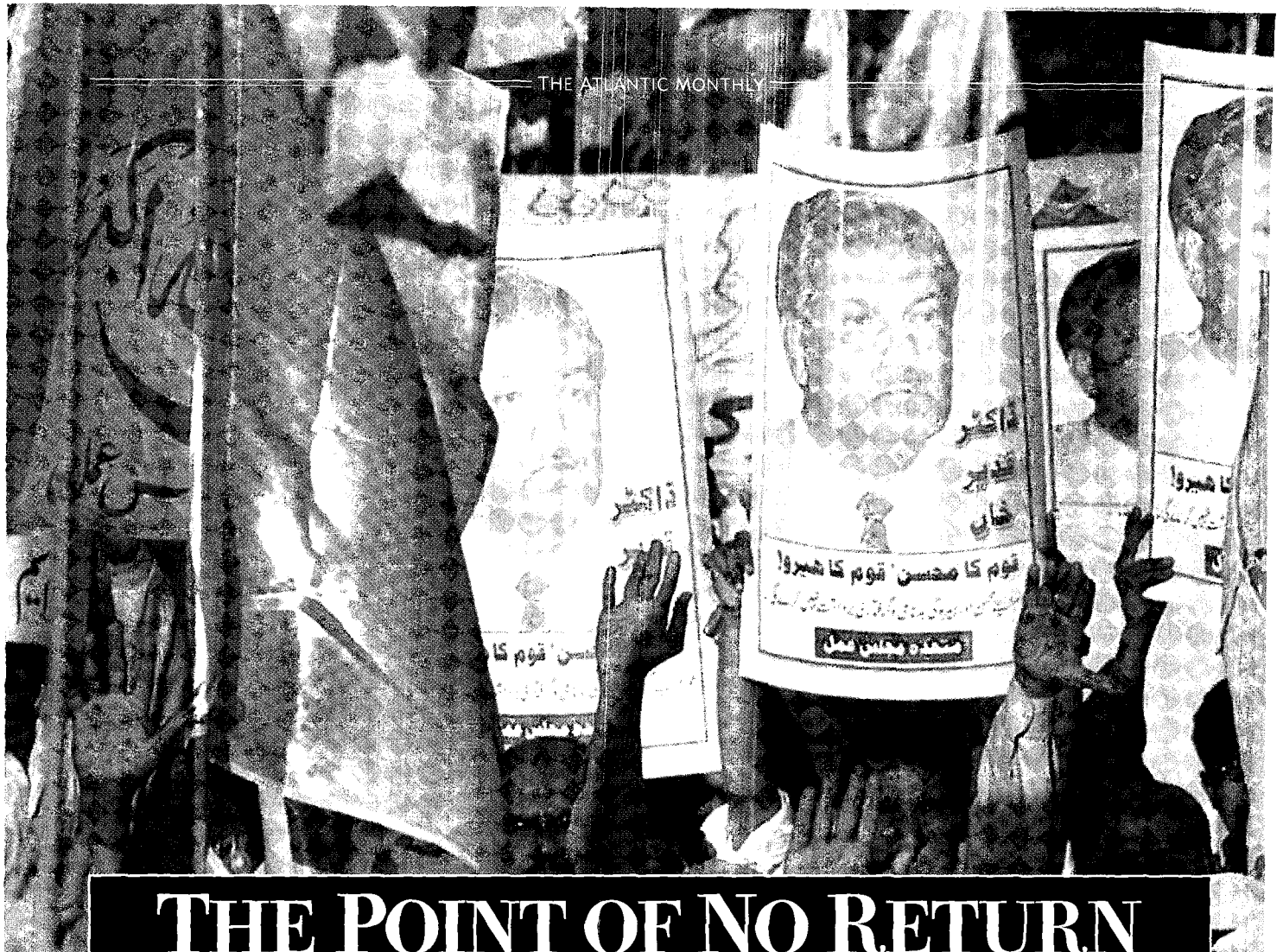
Somebody could write a poem about this,
Something to mark this whole thing that's going on,
But if they did, probably they shouldn't include
The coffee and the part about Betsy dropping the flag.

—BILLY COLLINS



Up in the night to piss
Saw the flag
Stripes & stars
Reflected in the stream
& in the morning
Still there

—GARY SNYDER



THE POINT OF NO RETURN

First Pakistan's A. Q. Khan showed that any country could have made a nuclear bomb. Then he showed—not once but three times—why the nuclear trade will never be shut down

BY WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

.....

By 1990 the mastermind behind Pakistan's nuclear bombs, Dr. Abdul Quadeer Khan, was living flamboyantly in Islamabad—indulged by Pakistan's military and civilian leaders; adored by the masses; ensconced in a multitude of luxurious houses; surrounded by bodyguards and sycophants; writing checks to schools, charities, and mosques; lecturing; and continuing to lead the large government laboratory that carried his name, in nearby Kahuta. In addition to running the 10,000 centrifuges and producing the highly enriched uranium necessary for Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, the laboratory had diversified into the design and production of other weapons, and was beginning to work on the problem of nuclear delivery by means of ballistic missiles. Pakistan, which had not yet tested its warheads, continued officially to deny the existence of a nuclear-weapons program, but its denials were sly and

William Langewiesche is a national correspondent for The Atlantic. This is the second of two reports about A. Q. Khan and nuclear proliferation.

patently insincere, like parodies of diplomatic sophistication, not intended to be believed. Particularly since the successful showdown with India three years earlier, during which both Khan and the Pakistani president were alleged to have threatened their Hindu neighbors with annihilation, Khan had been freed from the need to be discreet. In public he had assumed the role he believed he deserved, no longer of just another refugee from the Partition, or of an arriviste in a land of the poor, but, rather, of Khan the Magnificent, a "brilliant scientist" who was wise and progressive, a patriot, and, indeed, the savior of Pakistan. Moreover, all Pakistan seemed to agree.

The fame had unbalanced him. He was subjected to a degree of public acclaim rarely seen in the West—an extreme close to idol worship, which made him hungry for more. Money seems never to have been his obsession, but it did play



February 5, 2004: Pakistanis demonstrate in support of A. Q. Khan at a rally in Karachi

a role. The nuclear laboratory was nourished by a large and secret budget for which no accounting was required and from which Khan freely drew funds as if they were his own. One might expect that Khan's largesse would have triggered an investigation, but in Pakistan it did not. I have repeatedly asked people there if they ever wondered about the origins of Khan's wealth. One man close to the ruling military regime led by the current dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, tried recently to convince me that Khan's wife, Hendrina, came from a rich Dutch family, and that it was her money he was spending. But most people were straighter with me. They made it clear that my question was naive, and typical of an American abroad; they had not wondered about the origins of Khan's wealth because they had taken it as a given that he was skimming, like everyone else. A Pakistani parliamentarian made the point that some of the highest positions in the government today are held by people who are not merely corrupt and opportunistic but are the very icons of Pakistani criminality—people from families with a known history of murder, extortion, vote-rigging, smuggling, and fraud. He had once complained about this to Musharraf, who had advised him to be more

realistic: Pakistan, Musharraf had said, is an imperfect society. The parliamentarian shrugged. Even the army is run like a real-estate racket, expropriating land from ordinary citizens and passing it on to officers for their personal gain. It is not by chance that Islamabad is a city of mansions, and that many of them are inhabited by retired generals. What was Khan's skimming compared with all that? And unlike the generals, who tended to lose every fight they provoked, Khan had delivered on his words.

Still, the idolization was excessive. I went to see another famous Pakistani who had received much of the same. He was Imran Khan, the Oxford-educated scion of a wealthy family, who had captained the greatest-ever Pakistani cricket team, had led it to multiple victories over the Indians, and in 1992 had capped his athletic career with a World Cup. The Subcontinent is so crazy for cricket that it essentially shuts down during important matches. Imran Khan, now fifty-three, is a tall and handsome man whose reputation for integrity—already strong—has been enhanced by his public denunciations of political corruption and by his founding of a large cancer hospital for the poor in Lahore. But that was not the point of my visit. Instead I wanted to talk to him about A. Q. Khan,

and more generally about the nature of fame in Pakistan. I said, "It seems so extreme. I understand how important the atomic bomb is to Pakistan. It is important to any country that acquires it. But I'm still wondering what it is about Pakistan that such a cult could be made around one man."

He said, "You have to understand the psyche of the Subcontinent, and not just Pakistan. If you go to India, there is more idol worship there—the worshipping of 'stars'—than you will find anywhere else in the world. I was a Pakistani playing in India, but I've never had such adulation. I mean, in India everything is worshipped. They have idols for everything. Hinduism, you know."

"Okay."

"You will find Indian film stars—all of them—behaving like A. Q. Khan. It's not just the size of the crowds; it's their attitude. Their film stars are like demigods, literally. Any celebrity. Their number-one batsman, for instance: the way he is treated in India is just incredible."

"People want to touch him?"

By 1990 the mastermind behind Pakistan's nuclear bombs had assumed the role he believed he deserved: Khan the Magnificent, a brilliant scientist who was wise, progressive, and a patriot. The fame had unbalanced him.

"More! He would need security. The first time we toured India, even to cross the lobby of the hotel from the lift to the coffee shop we needed security guards. It was that sort of thing. The hotel was surrounded by thousands of people. We had never *seen* such a spectacle in our lives. And that culture is also in Pakistan—not to the same extent, because Islam challenges it, but don't forget that most people here were converts from Hinduism, and they have retained a lot of these qualities."

"And when you are on the receiving end? How do you keep perspective on yourself?"

He said, "People react so differently. I used to see, on the cricket team, boys coming up from poor backgrounds, and not well educated at all. When fame would hit them, some would not be able to handle it. It would destroy them. For instance, they would turn to alcohol, because that is the trapping of success in Pakistan: it is very expensive to drink alcohol. So they would get into this crowd that would want to be associated with them: the nouveau riche, the old rich, they would invite these boys. A lot of the players would lose balance, and think this was going to last forever. I think lack of education has a lot to do with it, because education allows you to stop living in a small world. What happens if you don't have an education and you get fame is that even in your own inner world you become oversized—this huge star."

"You studied history at Oxford?"

"And political science."

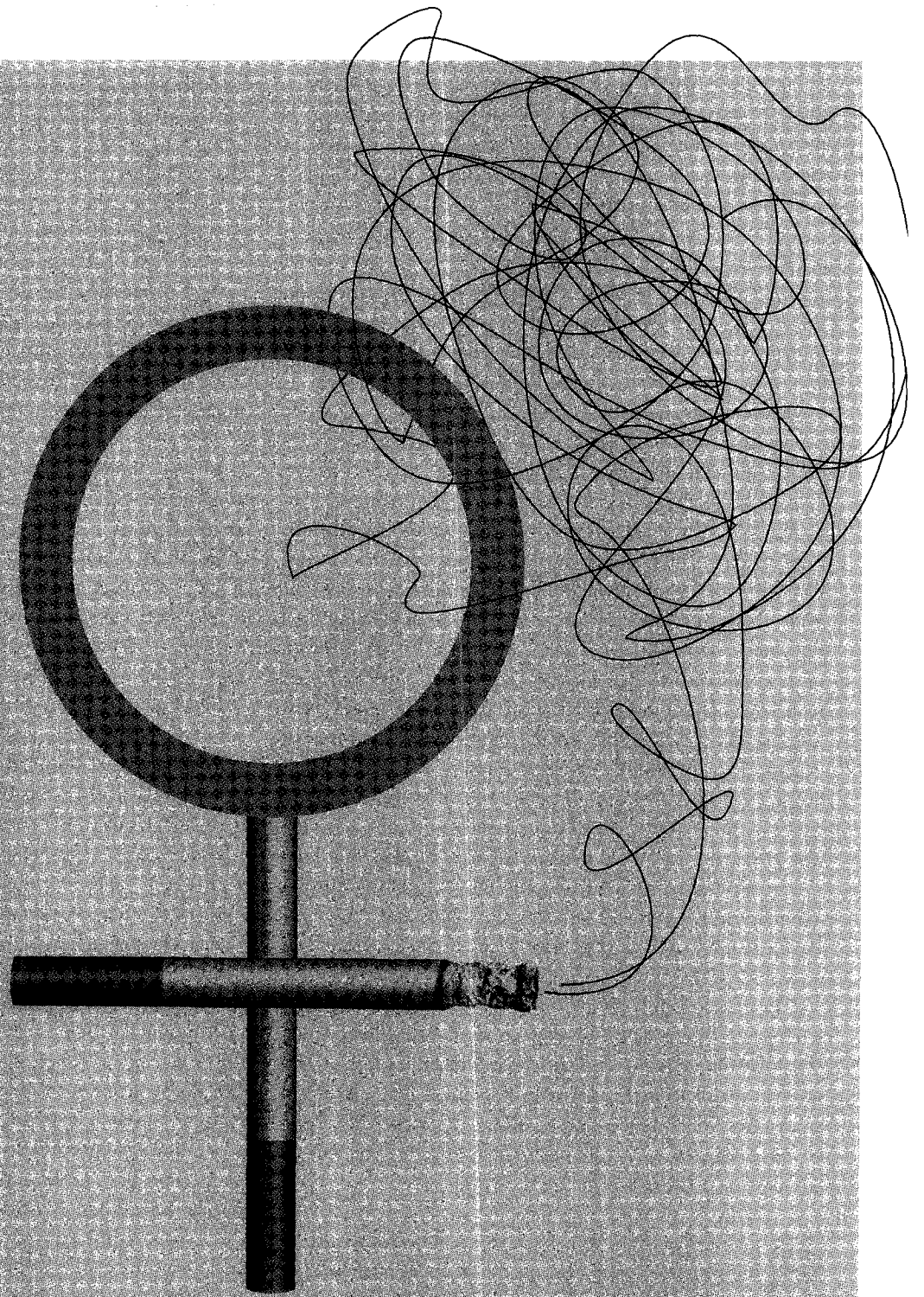
I said, "But A. Q. Khan was educated too."

He said, "Yes, so with A. Q. Khan I don't know. But when I was in England, I used to find that some people at the university who studied science, when they were outside their field they were quite silly—stupid, really. Whereas people who went into the arts or general fields like politics or history, they were much better socially. I remember this one nuclear scientist who was on our team, and I would wonder how he was ever going to function in life. He did well on his exams, and he even got a first, which is very rare at Oxford. But beyond that?" He laughed at the memory. He said, "I found Abdul Quadeer exactly the same. I remember we were once on a TV program together, in a panel of four or five people on a stage in front of a live audience of students. I heard him answering the questions, and I thought, 'This can't be the great Abdul Quadeer!' Because he sounded like a child, really. Someone in the audience stood up and said, 'You are so great, and I don't think you're getting the acknowledgment you deserve.' You know, he pandered to Abdul Quadeer. And instead of saying, 'Who in Pakistan has received more acknowledgment and fame?', Abdul Quadeer said, 'Yes, you're right. No one bothers about me in this country.' And he went on and on. I was so surprised. Here was this man, in front of these kids, and he was really feeling sorry for himself. It was bizarre. I thought, 'What is going on here?'"

The convenient answer to that question now, years later, is that A. Q. Khan was running amok, that he was an addict of sorts, unable anymore to find sufficient gratification from his activities in Pakistan, and that unbeknownst to either the Pakistani authorities or the American government he was going rogue, selling his nuclear secrets abroad.

There are elements of truth in all that, as there are in most fiction. In Lahore I went to see a former finance minister named Mubashir Hasan, an engineer by training, who in his later years has become a pacifist and one of the rare critics of Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program. Hasan is a thin man with a gentle demeanor. On both days we met, at his ramshackle house in a leafy district of the city, he was dressed like a saint, entirely in white. We discussed the funding of Khan's laboratory over the years, and in general terms the extent to which Saudi Arabia and other countries had contributed to it. He said, "But if you want to find out exactly where the money came from, from what country, and in return for which state secrets, or how the accounts were kept, how much was taken out by which crooks—all that will remain secret for a long time. There is really no way of knowing."

I asked him how Khan could have gotten away with so



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much for so long. He said, "It is a cultural trait. The Western assumption that law should treat everyone the same way is no longer applicable in this country, in this culture. In Pakistan relationships exist only on an individual level, and as an individual I am entitled to forgive you or penalize you no matter what the law says. It is a feudal culture—or a degenerated feudal culture. That is why there is no law for the elites in Pakistan—why they do whatever they want to do. So your question of why nobody investigated A. Q. Khan? He must have had allies in high places who ignored his activities. You've given us the bomb. All power to you."

But trading in nuclear-weapons technology is more than just a form of misbehavior. To ignore such activities once they are known is in effect to participate in them. The lack of financial trails is inconvenient, but it does not obscure the essential history. A. Q. Khan had allies in high places who, rather than ignoring his activities, were directly involved. In Pakistan this can only mean the generals, including some of those currently in power, and to a certain but unknowable degree Musharraf himself. Hasan mentioned that the country's leaders had without question been given plenty of warning. It turns out that Munir Ahmed Khan, A. Q. Khan's despised rival and the director of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, had been a longtime friend of Hasan's. In the late 1980s Munir Ahmed Khan had repeatedly complained to Hasan that A. Q. Khan was corrupt and, more important, that he was involved in selling Pakistan's nuclear-weapons technology abroad. According to Hasan, Munir Ahmed Khan had taken the same complaints to the generals in charge at the time, and of course nothing had been done.

Hasan used the term "traitorous" to characterize A. Q. Khan's activities. I said, "Can an activity be traitorous when the government itself is complicit, and in a country without effective law? I mean, at what point does such activity in such a place simply become a policy?"

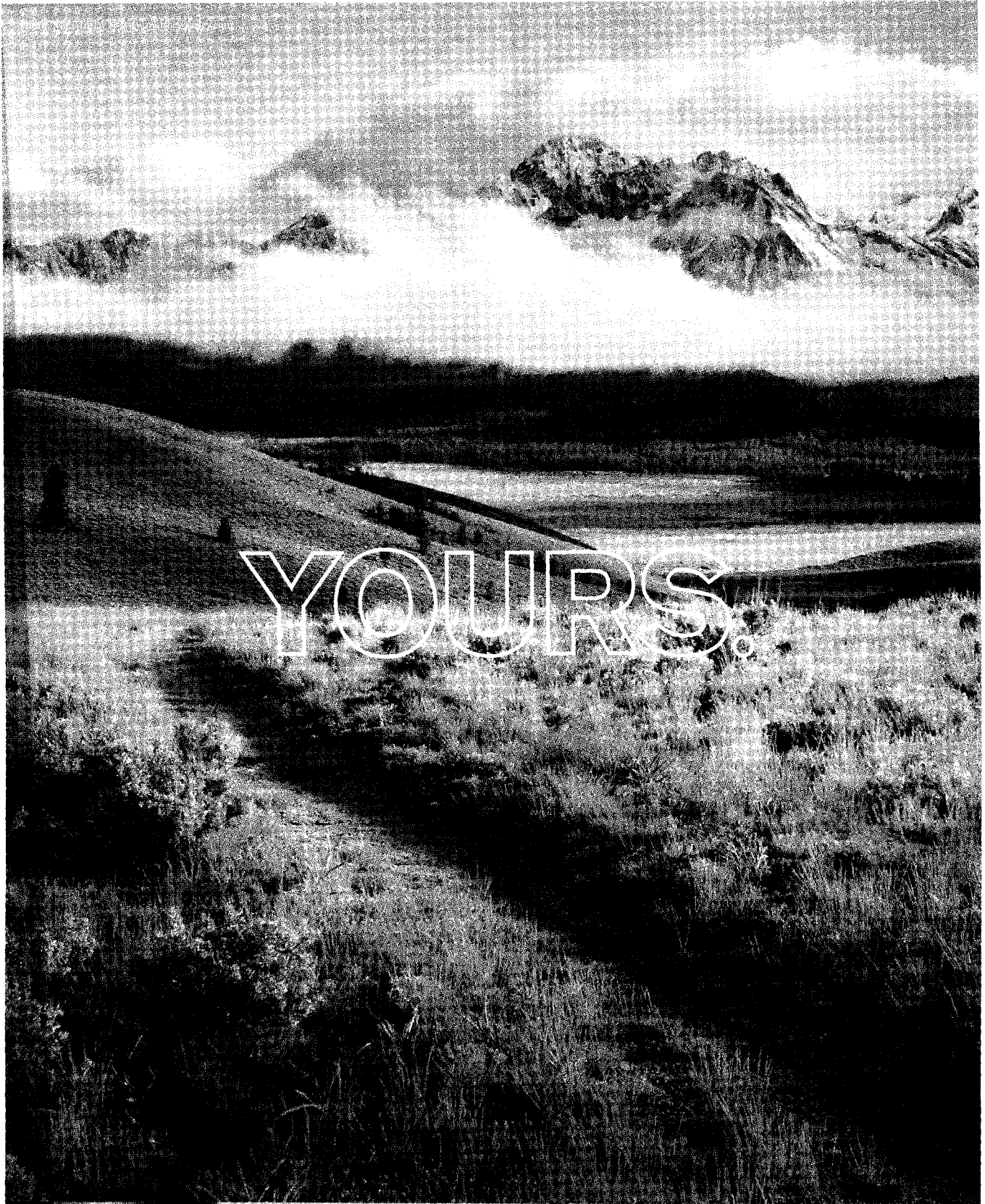
He gave that to me. He said, "You're right. You can be a traitor only if the power is not aware."

Beyond Pakistan, those aware of A. Q. Khan's growing proclivity to export his nuclear wares included a small number of non-proliferation specialists in the intelligence services of the West. These were people sworn to secrecy, and though they were concerned, they remained largely paralyzed so long as their own governments—and particularly the leaders of the United States—placed greater importance on propping up the various Pakistani regimes than on stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. Just outside these circles, however, stood a few unofficial observers who were harder to control, and who kept peering in. The most persistent of them was an obscure American journalist named Mark Hibbs, who is largely unknown to the public, but must rank as one of the greatest reporters at work in the world today.

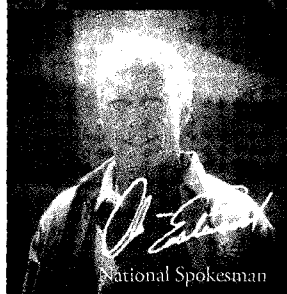
Hibbs is a legend within the secretive realm of nuclear power. At the age of fifty-four now, he is based in Bonn, Germany, where he lives with his longtime girlfriend when he is not traveling. He travels a lot. With a slight shift in intent he would have made an excellent spy. He looks like one too, with a bearing so ordinary for a middle-aged man that from even a short distance away—in a hotel lobby, in a restaurant, on a European street—he can be hard to identify. His face would be ordinary too, were it not for the exceptional intelligence that animates his features when he speaks and the habit he has of frowning in deep concentration while remembering the events that have shaped his work.

Those events go way back. For more than twenty years Hibbs has been reporting the news for *Nucleonics Week* and *Nuclear Fuel*, two publications with ultra-high subscription rates and correspondingly low circulations, now disseminated primarily on the Web. These publications stand among sixty-five similar ones in a McGraw-Hill group called Platts, dedicated to the petrochemical and energy industries. Other Platts titles include *Megawatt Daily*, *Emissions Daily*, and *Dirty Tankerwire*. Subscribers to *Nucleonics Week* also receive daily "Nuclear News Flashes," which could nicely be shortened to "Nuclear Flashes" if only Platts would lighten up. But Platts will not. Hibbs is its star, but he earns just a modest middle-class salary that allows him to get by. Platts has a lock on him in part because there are so few journalistic outlets for his knowledge. Much of what he writes is of short-term interest at best, and only to regulators and nuclear-energy insiders; he has filed thousands of such service reports over the years. Imbedded among them, however, are several hundred related dispatches—usually inconclusive, yet accurate and precise—that together tell an ongoing story of great consequence to the international political order, and perhaps even to the survival of mankind. That story is about the gradual failure of the United States, Europe, Russia, and China to prevent nuclear arsenals from spreading around the globe, and the ferocious determination to acquire such arsenals that upstart nations, some banding together, continue to show.

It is to Hibbs's advantage that he is not, strictly speaking, a spy. Because he works in the open, without a security clearance, he is not bound by government policies and cannot easily be silenced. There are others outside the government who share his freedom—professors, analysts, and advocates—and a few of them are very good, but none have produced results to equal his. Superficially, what he does seems simple enough: he ferrets out details from a variety of sources, fits them into patterns in his mind, and writes them up. But that process requires unlimited patience, sound technical knowledge, an intense determination to avoid making mistakes, and a sense for the plausible in a world full of lies. These are rare attributes, and in Hibbs they combine. It helps that he is not a crusader, and that although he privately regrets the spread of



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nuclear weapons, in his reports he takes no sides. It helps as well that publications he writes for do not accept advertisements, and understand that their value to their readers lies in delivering the news even if that news embarrasses the industry or is otherwise impolite.

He told me once that it is very lonely work, and more so even than ordinary writing, because for all his influence, he writes for an audience imbued with secrecy, and therefore rarely hears from his readers. Speaking of a meeting he attended of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA, he said, "I remember I sat down in the back of the room, and there was a delegate from one of the Western countries who was sitting next to me. I looked at him, and on his lap he had a copy of an article I did on the Iranian centrifuge program. It was a Xerox of the article I did. And the copy was meticulously underlined, and some things were circled, and there were written comments in the margins. So I tapped him on the shoulder and said, 'You know, that's interesting. Can you tell me where you got that article?' He looked at me and said, 'Why do you want to know?' I said, 'Because I'm the author.' So what did he do? He turned white as a sheet, and just ran out of the room! It was the weirdest thing."

Weird perhaps, but standard for Hibbs. That was his point. He said, "Sometimes I feel that what I do is happening in a black box. The readers have security clearances. They read what I write in classified rooms in government offices and companies all over the world, and often they don't like what they're seeing. So how do they react? They go and talk to their buddies, who also have security clearances. Or they send a message to their enemies, and it's the same thing. You could be unleashing a major international crisis and wouldn't even know it, because it's all secret. Once the information is out there, you have no idea what's going on. Most of the time you just don't know. You don't hear about it. The reaction itself becomes classified. The lack of feedback is the really disturbing thing about this job."

Still, as he admitted to me, he has thrived.

It is not a life a person could seek, or even imagine in advance. Hibbs was born in 1951 in a nondescript town in upstate New York. His father was a smalltime accountant, and characteristically tidy. His mother was a housewife, and came from a large working-class Irish family. Hibbs had six uncles and aunts from her side alone, and many of them lived nearby with children of their own. As one of the oldest among the cousins, Hibbs was the focus of his aunts' and uncles' attention. When the Vietnam War came along, they assumed that the right thing to do was to go off and fight.

But Hibbs went off to Cornell instead, and they were nonetheless proud. They believed that the purpose of attending a good university was to learn good manners—how to wear a suit, sip wine, and hold a knife and fork in just the cor-

rect style. For Hibbs it did not work out that way. He joined the rebellion of the time, and when he returned home on break, he ate with his fingers and flaunted his long hair. He opposed the war in Vietnam, and wanted America to change. He marched in demonstrations. But he never became as radical as his friends. He simply could not follow along with other people's thinking without at some point considering that perhaps they were wrong. This, of course, was the real benefit of a good education, and it later served him well in deciphering the mysteries of nuclear proliferation. But even now in his family there must be some who do not understand.

In 1973, the last year of the draft, he graduated from Cornell with a degree in literature and history, and drifted to Boston, where for some years he worked as a cartographer, designing maps for public-transportation agencies. In the late 1970s he moved to New York and enrolled in a master's program at Columbia to study international diplomacy. He knew that Israel had nuclear arms, and that India had tested its own device (the "Smiling Buddha" of 1974), but he was not aware of Pakistan's ongoing program to respond in kind. If he thought about nuclear weapons at all, it was in the conventional terms of the Cold War turning hot. In July of 1981 the realities of proliferation were briefly thrust upon him when the Israeli Air Force bombed the French-built Osirak reactor in Iraq, ending a secret attempt by Saddam Hussein to extract plutonium from spent fuel and acquire a nuclear arsenal of his own. But Hibbs did not imagine that he himself would ever be involved in such matters.

He had a talent for language that allowed him eventually to learn German, Dutch, and French, as well as some Russian and a little Chinese. After leaving Columbia he stayed on in New York, working as a freelance consultant and editor, primarily for a German government office, but he found it difficult to earn a living, and so left for Europe, from which he has never permanently returned. For a while he lived in London, doing research for the *Financial Times* in the energy business—an area previously unknown to him, but of sufficient depth to engage his mind. He moved to Bonn, where he continued the same work and contributed occasionally to *Business Week*. His writing was concise. He was in no sense yet anything like a spy. Without having thought his career through in advance, he had become a reporter.

In 1986, when Hibbs was thirty-five, the Soviet reactor at Chernobyl, in Ukraine, melted down. Hibbs began to travel to the Soviet Union to report on its nuclear industry, a subject still largely hidden from view. The puzzle fascinated him. He was a fast learner, capable both of grasping physical technicalities and, more important, of navigating the complex political terrain that surrounds the use of nuclear power. His interest in the field expanded worldwide. By then he had found his outlet, too, and was writing for *Platts*, which soon hired him full-time.

For a while he wrote only about civil nuclear power. To anyone outside the industry it was mind-numbing stuff. But

beneath the surface in Europe was action of a different sort: though the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) had come into force, and parallel protocols had been agreed upon to restrict the export of materials necessary for the construction of nuclear bombs, enforcement was lax, and individual companies, particularly in Germany, were eagerly doing business with a growing number of nuclear-weapons aspirants. Much of the business was questionable but not obviously illegal; for the most sensitive items it involved dealings with middlemen who worked through front companies and third-country destinations and provided the sellers with usable explanations. Then as now, European attitudes were soft despite official abhorrence of such activities, because in private the nuclear non-proliferation initiatives—accompanied as they were by repeated U.S. scolding—were perceived by many European officials as yet another self-serving American crusade. Along with their resentment of American domination came an understanding that providing nuclear technology (especially in big packages to the Middle East) was a way of gaining European influence in strategically important regions. Hibbs began to write extensively about the activity in 1988, when the German parliament, the Bundestag, finally opened an investigation. For two years government officials and businessmen were called in to explain their dealings, especially with Pakistan. Some sessions were tense. In the end, however, the Bundestag issued a report absolving German companies of involvement in the trade. The report was absurd. Hibbs wrote it up at length but brushed it aside.

Neither he nor his readers needed the Bundestag to tell them what was going on. Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program, though officially denied, was well known to the world by then, as was the existence of its procurement network in Europe. A. Q. Khan had been bragging about himself for years: it was he who had stolen the centrifuge designs from the Dutch-British-German consortium URENCO, in Holland; who had used them to construct a plant in Pakistan for the enrichment of weapons-grade uranium; who had built the necessary procurement network worldwide; and who, he sometimes slyly implied, had followed through with the design for a Pakistani bomb. Indeed, Khan was already such a figure in the West that as far back as 1985 he had been featured in *Time* magazine. In the European and American press he was portrayed as an evil scientist and a treacherous spy, but in many ways it made sense for Pakistan to have the bomb—as much, at least, as it does for other countries, including the United States. In private Hibbs would probably have disagreed; recently to me he characterized Khan's efforts as “diabolical.” But he kept those thoughts to himself, and in print went hard after the nuclear news.

Some of that news continued to be of Pakistan. A few of

the most blatant suppliers were prosecuted in Germany and the Netherlands; more were identified but, for lack of proof of intent, they were left to continue the trade. The Pakistani procurement network remained large and robust, providing not only for A. Q. Khan's uranium-enrichment plant but also for a parallel program to acquire plutonium—the alternative material for a fission bomb—which was led by Munir Ahmed Khan, at the head of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. Over the course of the 1990s Hibbs dug through the evidence, forming hypotheses in his mind and asking increasingly precise questions of obscure specialists who knew of him but did not necessarily know what he was after.

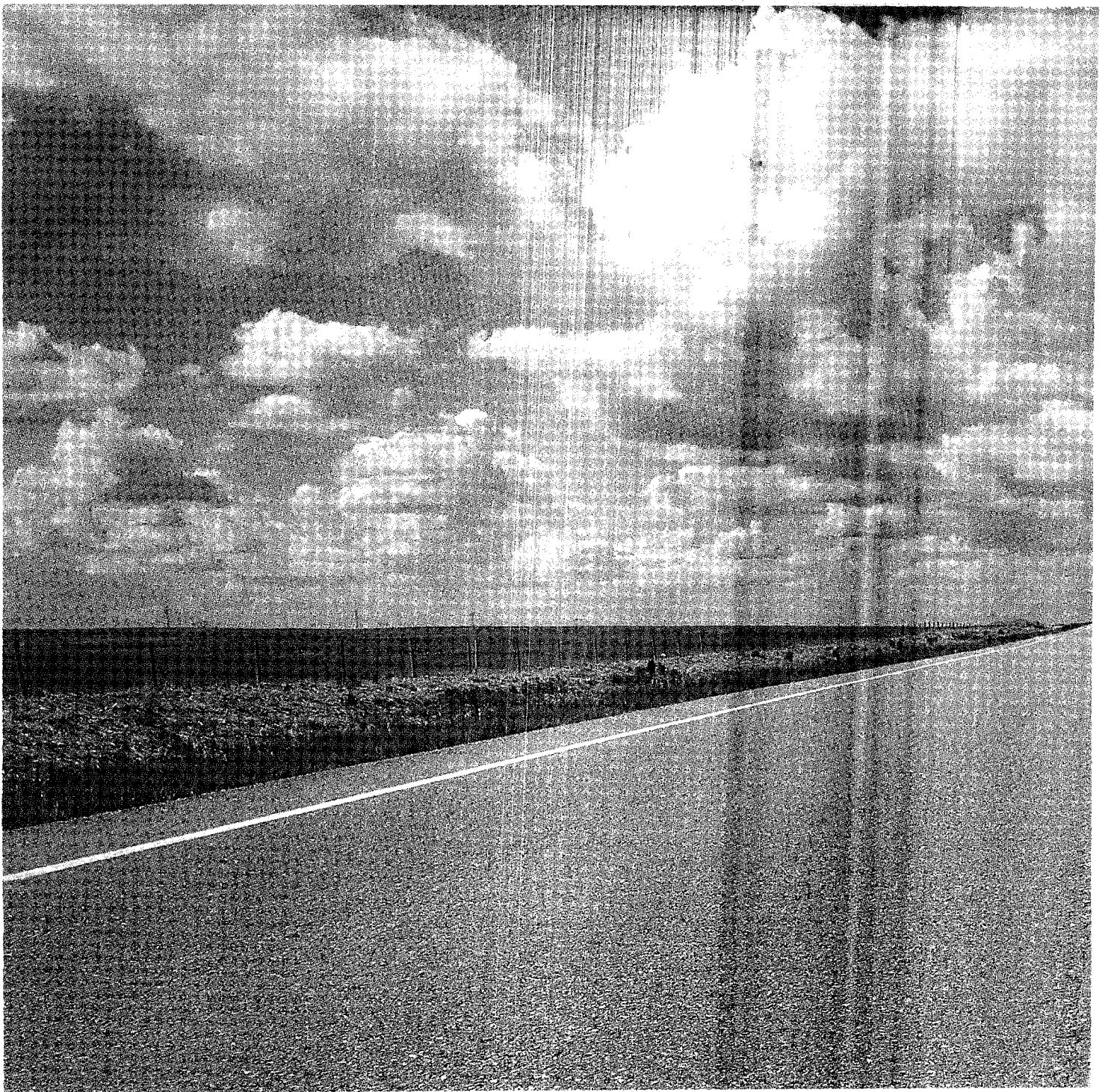
I asked him to take me inside his investigative process. He said, “There was a German company that was exporting a certain device to Pakistan that in the worst case could have been for the nuclear-weapons program. All the surface evidence suggested that no, this was the case of a scientist who went to Pakistan and sold some equipment to an innocuous research institution—and that was the end of it. That was the official explanation in Germany. But then I looked at it, and looked at it again from a couple of different points of view, and there was a very small chance that the equipment

Those aware of Khan's growing proclivity to export his nuclear wares—to Iraq, Iran, North Korea—were paralyzed as long as their own governments were more interested in propping up various Pakistani regimes.

could have been used for removing tritium, a gas that comes into play in nuclear weapons. I wondered, ‘Could you use the equipment for that? I mean, it's pretty far-fetched, but is it possible?’ After a while I realized you *could* use it for that. Then I wondered, ‘Is there anything else he did that indicated he had the know-how?’ I started talking to people, and just kept asking one question after another. I was operating in a vacuum, and people in the nuclear laboratories in the U.S. weren't supposed to be telling me anything. But I kept asking, ‘Could it be this?’ and ‘Could it be that?’ and ‘If that's true, could it also be this?’ And after several months, when it appeared that the answers were all yes, finally the article I wrote stated that this guy in Germany had exported equipment to Pakistan for the removal of tritium. And I'm told that inside the U.S. laboratories there was a shit storm, because what I wrote matched what they were thinking, and it was all classified.”

I said, “But day-to-day what does that work really look like, tangibly?”

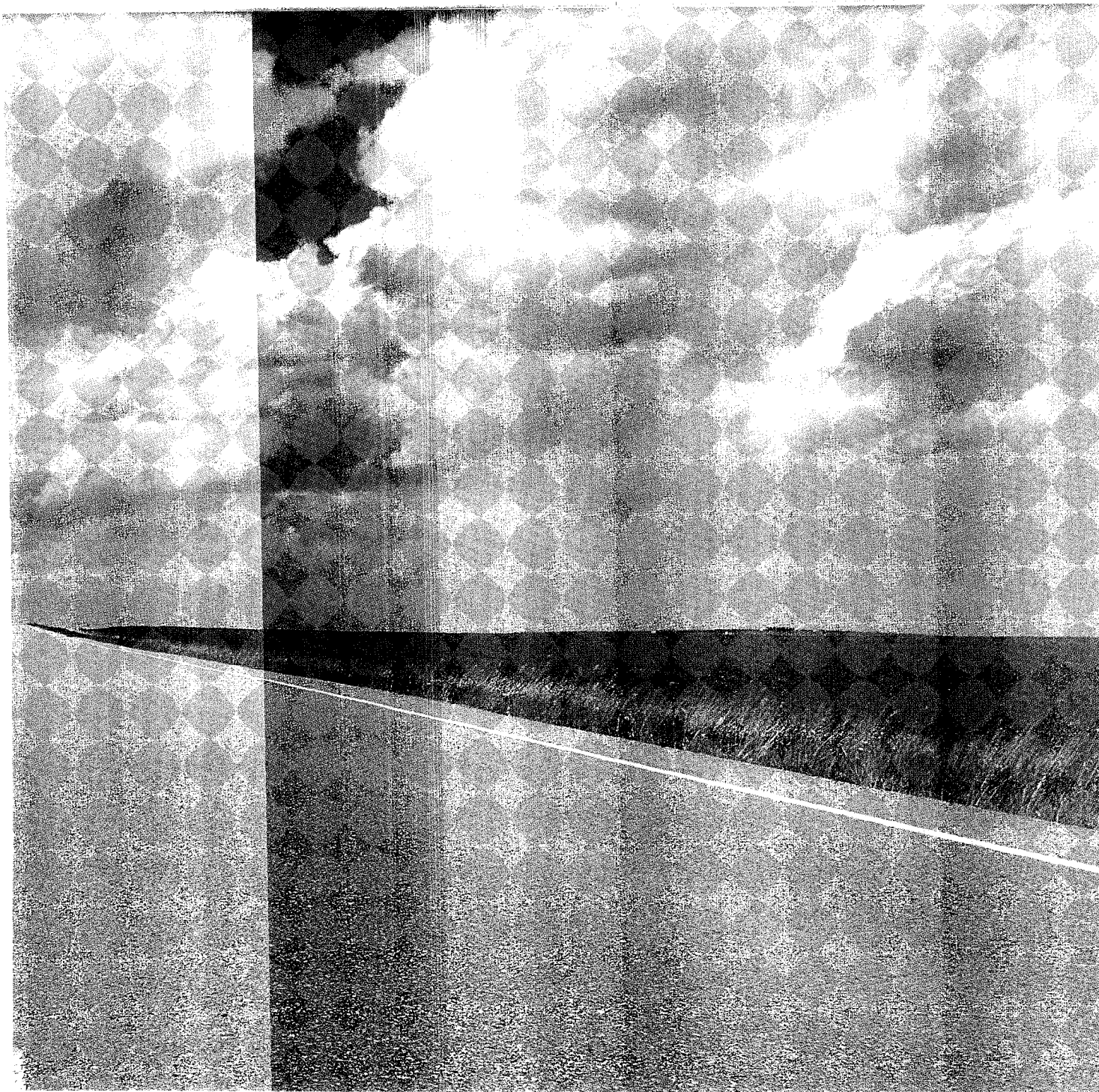
He said, “It looks like talking to as many people as you can.”



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"With narrow questions?"

"Yeah, but also general, generic questions. If you call somebody in a government laboratory and you ask him, 'Do you think this German is exporting equipment for Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program?', the guy will probably hang up. He'll think, 'What? Nuclear weapons in Pakistan? This is a government laboratory, and this reporter doesn't have a security clearance! *Get OFF the phone!*' But if you meet the same guy at a conference and you ask him a generic question about the configuration of the machine—'If the piece of equipment is configured like this, could it be used for that, could it be used for this?'—then maybe he will answer. And then if you ask a bunch of different people the same generic question, maybe something will crystallize out of it, and you'll get closer."

Mark Hibbs is a legend within the secretive realm of nuclear power. He would have been an excellent spy. Because he works in the open, without a security clearance, he is not bound by government policies and cannot be silenced.

Hibbs writes about wisps of smoke. Still, over the years the wisps have added up. A growing number of diplomats and policy analysts now express satisfaction that earlier predictions of a widely nuclearized world have been proved wrong, but it is largely just the timing that was off. Non-proliferation functionaries would earnestly disagree with such a gloomy assessment, as they must because of the business they are in. It is natural that they cite their successes, and necessary that they struggle on. But despite the occasional collapse of nuclear-weapons programs, and the inconveniencing of programs in place, the readers of *Platts* over the years can have harbored few illusions about the trend. Proliferation is a ratcheting affair that moves in fits and starts, and often slips backwards, but gradually and incrementally progresses. Diplomatic efforts to suppress it are weakened by national jealousies, UN-style dithering, higher geopolitical priorities, the sheer volume of international trade, and, at the most fundamental level, the inability of the Great Powers themselves to disarm. In a world where perhaps ten countries have already acquired the bomb, and another thirty have the capacity to build one relatively fast, rational reasons for choosing that path will now and then arise. If even Pakistan can go nuclear, almost any other nation can as well.

None of this was an argument for giving up on the struggle to restrict nuclear weapons, or for turning away from the non-proliferation treaties and accords as they existed. Indeed, Hibbs's writing made it clear that these international instruments needed to be strengthened. By 1989 smoke was

rising on many horizons. Word emerged through Israeli intelligence that Saddam Hussein, having suffered the loss of the Osirak reactor, had reconstituted a nuclear-weapons program and was pushing to build a functioning bomb within two years. Iraq had signed the NPT, and had therefore been subject to twice-yearly inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is headquartered in Vienna. Such inspections were at that time strangely unobtrusive worldwide. They occurred by invitation only, with itineraries controlled by the host governments and negotiated weeks in advance. In Iraq they had resulted in little more than some good dinners, perhaps a belly-dancing show, and the chance to tour around. By the IAEA's diplomatic standards the country remained clean. This meant either that the report from Israel was false (and probably propaganda) or that a serious failure had occurred at the very core of the NPT. After the 1991 Gulf War it turned out that both were to some degree true.

Meanwhile, Hibbs filed a dispatch—the first of more than 160 that he wrote on proliferation in Iraq—in which he described widespread skepticism among nuclear

experts that any Iraqi program could be so close to producing a bomb, and gave the reasons why. In time his skepticism became a point of contention with the mainstream American press, which reflected Washington's tendency to take Saddam at his word and to exaggerate the immediate nuclear danger that he posed. Hibbs reflected a more sober view. As always, his writing was based on the closest attention to detail. He did not doubt that Iraqi engineers could someday build a bomb, and that Saddam Hussein was just the man to use it, but he was aware of the technical difficulties that would first have to be overcome.

The largest difficulty was acquiring sufficient quantities of bomb-grade fuel. As is now known, Iraq had abandoned the hope of extracting plutonium from its civil reactors and, like Pakistan and other countries, had decided instead to pursue weapons built around cores of highly enriched uranium. As a signatory to the NPT it had the right to use lower-grade enriched uranium for power generation and research, but such fuel was monitored, or "safeguarded," by the IAEA, and therefore was difficult to divert into a weapons program without attracting attention. The solution was to construct an entirely separate enrichment program that from start to finish would remain hidden from sight, or at least be deniable. In the mid-1980s—toward the end of the war with Iran, when Saddam was still something of a friend of the United States—Iraq launched a secret initiative to buy or steal the necessary parts, mostly from the West. Hibbs eventually caught on. Writing from Bonn in the summer of 1990, just after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, he broke the news of an exten-

sive Iraqi procurement effort under way in Europe and the United States, whose purpose was to acquire the materials necessary for a uranium-enrichment centrifuge plant.

Over the months that followed, during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, Hibbs continued to dig into Iraq's European activities; without drawing the connection explicitly, he described a gray-market procurement network that was remarkably similar to Pakistan's, and in some cases exactly the same. The main suppliers were German, with the Swiss and others, primarily in Northern Europe, pitching in productively. In December of 1990, during the buildup to the Gulf War, the London *Sunday Times* published the alarming news that Iraq's centrifuge program was merely a year away from enriching enough uranium for a bomb. On Christmas Eve, Hibbs reported that the centrifuge in question was of an early URENCO design, not quite as advanced as the one presumed to have been stolen by A. Q. Khan, but perhaps good enough to do the job—if it could be made to spin at the necessary speeds without falling apart, and then linked to a minimum of several hundred like-spinning clones arranged in a “cascade” through which gassified uranium would flow. The source of the centrifuge design was believed to be a German subcontractor to URENCO, whose engineers seem to have had access to the plans even after leaving the company. Hibbs had traveled to Munich to meet one of the prime suspects, a centrifuge expert named Bruno Stemmler, who had gone to Baghdad as a consultant two years before, and against whom a German criminal investigation had been dropped in frustration. Hibbs got him to talk. Stemmler claimed to have no knowledge of Iraq's suppliers, but he admitted to having met with Iraqi engineers, and he described what he had seen of their centrifuge in detail. He was so untroubled by the contacts he had made that he even told Hibbs about offering the Iraqis advice on modifications that would shorten the enrichment cycle. “But they were not interested,” Hibbs—clearly reserving judgment—reported that Stemmler said. The Iraqis' lack of interest does seem unlikely, given the personal consequences of failure under Saddam Hussein, but Stemmler's measure of their program later turned out to be for the most part true. In brief, they had managed to build, at best, perhaps a single centrifuge, which they had not fully tested. They must have made progress in the two years following, but according to Stemmler, as reported by Hibbs, the existence of a functioning centrifuge cascade in an operational enrichment plant, which was the premise of the report in the London *Sunday Times*, remained “completely far-fetched and absurd.”

Then came the Western bombing campaign and the short Gulf War, during which Iraq was easily pushed out of Kuwait. As part of the peace settlement new and more assertive nuclear inspections were imposed on the Iraqi regime. The inspections were run by the IAEA and a group created specifically for this purpose, the United Nations Special Commission, or UNSCOM, whose job was to search

for weapons of mass destruction in all forms—chemical and biological as well as nuclear. The inspectors had the right to talk to whomever they pleased, and to go wherever they wanted without advance notice. The Iraqis obstructed them, of course, but over the next few years the inspectors uncovered a lot. What they found came as a shock. Though it was true that the Iraqi centrifuge program had never moved beyond the initial testing stages, it was larger and more serious than had previously been known. In intent, at least, this was not merely an experimental effort but an industrial-scale attempt to build nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Iraq had been pursuing an even larger program using electromagnetic machines called calutrons—an enrichment technology declassified by the United States in 1949, and thought to be so obsolete that no one, including Hibbs, had suspected Iraq might choose it. In this case, however, “obsolete” meant easier to acquire. The calutron program had advanced significantly beyond the centrifuge efforts. In the summer of 1992 Hibbs reported that at the start of the Gulf War it had been about three years from producing enough highly enriched uranium to give Saddam his first atomic bomb.

But the greatest shock was that such industrial-scale nuclear programs—using components purchased in the West, and directly under the nose of the IAEA—had gone largely undetected. Indeed, it became apparent that unlike certain nuclear aspirants that had refused to join the NPT (India, Israel, Pakistan, Argentina, and Brazil, among others), thereby exposing their intentions, Iraq had used the treaty as a cover, gaining greater freedom of action than it otherwise would have had. The revelations emerging from Iraq provoked a crisis among non-proliferation specialists and diplomats; particularly in Europe and the United States it was understood that if the treaty was not to collapse, something would have to be done. And something was. Over the years that followed the Gulf War export-control lists were expanded, necessitating a new level of governmental scrutiny (in participating states) prior to the export of “dual use” machines, materials, and components—the often innocuous items that had been identified nonetheless as the building blocks of nuclear-weapons programs. The export-control-list expansion forced the European procurement networks largely underground by eliminating much of the ambiguity that had existed until then, and it required companies and consultants to break their national laws if they wanted to pursue their nuclear-weapons business, questions of conscience aside. In the new context of a now proven danger, some of the bureaucratic resistance to American activism faded away, and cooperation among the various intelligence and law-enforcement agencies increased. Furthermore, in 1997 the NPT was augmented with an “Additional Protocol” that allowed for more-rigorous IAEA scrutiny of declared nuclear facilities in those countries willing to join. There was a twist, which continues to limit the effectiveness of IAEA inspections today: as an international agency whose primary

purpose is to promote the civil use of nuclear power, the IAEA was expressly prohibited from developing expertise in nuclear weapons, and could address proliferation only by auditing civil facilities for signs of military diversions—working around the edges of the real question on everyone's mind. Nonetheless, the Additional Protocol, like the other measures taken in the aftermath of the Gulf War, probably helped to buy the world some time.

But even as the advanced nations closed ranks against conventional proliferation—the leakage of nuclear know-how from nations like Germany to nations like Iraq—the new form of proliferation emerged, in which the nuclear upstarts began to help one another. There were reasons for this beyond convenience and greed. They amounted to a moralistic rejection of the discriminatory nuclear order as enshrined in the NPT. In principle the rejection made sense. If all peoples are created equal, why not here, too? This was the same question that until recently had undermined export controls in Europe and elsewhere. The answers were practical rather than principled, and for certain countries they were not good enough. In any event this new form of proliferation lay largely beyond the conventional structures of control. As is now widely known, the pioneer was Pakistan, where A. Q. Khan exploited the connections he had developed in acquiring nuclear weapons and, by neatly diverting the inbound procurement flows, eventually set up a virtual nuclear-weapons market in which countries could buy the entire package, from the necessary machine shops and centrifuges to the blueprints for a bomb.

Without quite knowing what he was looking at, Mark Hibbs wrote about the early signs. In October of 1990, in a report on the Iraqi centrifuge program, he described skepticism among nuclear specialists that Iraq possessed the necessary engineering expertise to mount such an effort, and he mentioned the possibility of Iraq's secret cooperation with Brazil or Pakistan—two countries beyond the IAEA's reach. It later turned out that those particular suspicions were unfounded—that the expertise at play in Iraq was mostly German. But the possibility of third-country proliferation was obviously on people's minds. In November of 1993 Hibbs broke the news that during a meeting the previous month in Baghdad, Saddam's deputy premier, Tariq Aziz, had told IAEA and UNSCOM inspectors that a Pakistani or Indian known simply as "Malik" and residing in Britain had in 1989 arranged for shipments of special high-strength steel for the construction of Iraq's clandestine centrifuges. Hibbs wrote that on the basis of this information British agents had tried to identify the man but had been unable to find him. At the end of his dispatch he mentioned that following the Baghdad meeting the IAEA director, Hans Blix, had reported to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that the information provided by Iraq appeared

to be mostly complete, though there were still some gaps.

One year later Hibbs returned to the subject, writing that Malik was a Pakistani whose full name was Mazhar Malik and who lived in South London, where he had a small trading company, Development & Technology Enterprises, Ltd. The company appeared on a U.S. Department of Agriculture list as having inquired into the export of food staples and cigarettes, among other materials. Hibbs reported that the high-strength steel had been sent by an Austrian firm through the port of Antwerp, and had traveled aboard two Pakistani ships to Dubai before being trucked to Iraq. Because of lax Austrian export laws at the time, the British agents who had finally tracked Malik down concluded that nothing illegal had transpired, and the IAEA now considered the case to be closed. Hibbs had gotten through by phone, and Malik had denied that he knew anything about the shipments of steel.

Then, in the summer of 1995, the name came up again. Saddam's son-in-law Hussein Kamel, the man in charge of the pre-war nuclear program, had fled to Jordan, and he was talking. Among the documents subsequently found on his chicken farm in Iraq was a top-secret memo written by agents of the Iraqi intelligence service, the Mukhabarat, and addressed to an unknown person in the nuclear-weapons program. The memo described an approach made to the Mukhabarat in October of 1990, during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, by a Pakistani named Malik, who claimed to be an intermediary for A. Q. Khan, and who offered to assist Iraq with centrifuges and the construction of a bomb. The asking price was \$5 million up front, with an additional 10 percent commission to be paid on all materials and components obtained. In translation the memo read:

Top Secret Personal ...

We have enclosed for you the following proposal from Pakistani scientist Dr. Abdul Quadeer Khan regarding the possibility of helping Iraq establish a project to enrich uranium and manufacture a nuclear weapon. The above mentioned expressed it as follows:

1. He is prepared to give us project designs for a nuclear bomb.
2. Ensure any requirements or materials from Western European countries via a company he owns in Dubai.
3. Request a preliminary technical meeting to consult on the documents that he will present to us. However, the current circumstances do not allow for an immediate meeting with the above mentioned. There is the possibility of meeting with the intermediary that we have connections and good relations with in Greece.
4. The motive behind this proposal is gaining profits for him and the intermediary.
5. The project has been given the code name of A-B to use in correspondence and consultations.

Please review and give us your opinion on this matter, so that we can take the initial steps to consult with him, according to the notes and instructions that we received from you. Thank you.

The Iraqis suspected that the offer might be a scam or a trap; they asked for a sample of the goods—possibly a component or blueprints. They never received the sample, because the Gulf War then erupted, and the ensuing international inspections swept away any chance for such a deal. Nonetheless, the offer was almost certainly real. After the memo was discovered, Western intelligence agencies and the IAEA kept it secret for nearly a decade, until 2004, presumably because of political pressures, or to allow further information on Khan's activities to be gathered. Neither Hibbs nor any other reporter wrote it up at the time. But Hibbs was catching on to Khan. He was beginning to piece together the signs that Pakistan's nuclear-procurement network had expanded into the business of spreading these weapons around.

Pakistan's sale of nuclear-weapons technology abroad did not require a deliberative process, a chain of command, or a formal commitment to proceed. More likely it took the shape of opportunities that occasionally arose and were acted on by a small circle of friends—the country's military rulers, its co-opted politicians, and, of course, A. Q. Khan and his men. They knew that such activities would provoke the United States, Europe, and other great powers—but they did not think of themselves as bad people, or believe that they were breaking international law. Whatever profits they hoped to gain from these deals would have been as much for the treasury as for their personal accounts—albeit in a country where such distinctions have little meaning. As to questions about the morality of promoting such lethal technology, they had some questions of their own—about the fairness of discriminatory non-proliferation treaties and a world order in which the established nuclear powers seemed determined to “disarm the disarmed.” This was the emotional spillover from Pakistan's experience of building a bomb, and it fed a genuine sense of solidarity with all other nuclear aspirants, including even a potential antagonist like Iran.

Indeed, Iran was Pakistan's longest-standing customer. In May of 1991 Mark Hibbs reported in *Nucleonics Week* on the possibility that Iran had launched a secret uranium-enrichment program in pursuit of nuclear weapons and that over the previous three years A. Q. Khan had made several visits there. Soon after the article was published, Hibbs received a phone call from an American diplomat named Richard Kennedy, who at the time was the U.S. ambassador for non-proliferation, and the chief American representative to the IAEA.

According to Hibbs, Kennedy said, “I’ve read your last article.”

Hibbs said, “Yeah?”

Kennedy said, “You know that thing about A. Q. Khan—that maybe he went to Iran? Can you tell me who told you that?”

Hibbs answered, “No.”

“Can I assume it’s a European intelligence source?”

“Yes.”

“Will you tell me which government it is?”

“No,” Hibbs said. “Does it strike your interest?”

Kennedy admitted that it did. He said, “We have a very strong interest in Dr. Khan and the Khan Research Laboratories. We pay very close attention to his work. In fact, our interest in this man is so intense that you can assume if he takes a toilet break and goes to the john, we know about it. We know where he is.”

Though it would be politically inconvenient to admit this now, the United States was aware not only of Khan's peddling of nuclear wares to Iran but also of the likely involvement of the army and the government of Pakistan. Hibbs has reported that the U.S. ambassador to Islamabad from 1988 to 1991, Robert B. Oakley, went around the embassy fuming, “They sold that stuff to those bastards!” and believes that Oakley expressed the same emotion more politely at the National Security Council. Oakley, who now works at the National Defense University, in Washington, D.C., does not recall knowing of the sales to Iran when he was ambassador, and says he was not asked to raise the matter with the Pakistani government. For political reasons

Nuclear proliferation is a ratcheting affair that moves in fits and starts, and often slips backwards, but gradually and incrementally progresses. If even Pakistan can go nuclear, almost any other nation can as well.

more than for reasons of national security, these are some of the most closely held secrets in the United States. For the same reasons, the apparent lack of good information is pointed to as yet another U.S. intelligence failure (add it to the implosion of the Soviet Union, to 9/11, to Iraq), when in reality the CIA knew fairly well what was happening, and an awareness of Pakistani actions should count as a U.S. intelligence success.

Not that awareness required great skill; in Pakistan the intent to sell nuclear-weapons technology lay clearly in view. In 1989, for instance, the Khan Research Laboratories held the first international conference in what would be a fifteen-year series of occasional courses and symposia on issues pertaining to uranium enrichment and centrifuges. These meetings, which were widely advertised, amounted to barely disguised promotional affairs, clearly intended to demonstrate Pakistan's expertise to potential nuclear-

weapons customers. By the end of the 1990s the Khan Research Laboratories were sending salesmen to international arms shows—in Malaysia, Indonesia, Abu Dhabi, and back home in Karachi—where they set up booths and passed out A. Q. Khan buttons and brochures advertising their conventional and nuclear products. In 2001, on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, KRL published a proud self-portrait, part of which read:

Keeping pace with the emerging demands of the competitive international defense products market, KRL ventured to offer its expertise, in the shape of services and products, not only to the domestic consumers but also to an international audience of friendly countries ... Although a fresh entrant, the participation of KRL from Pakistan was warmly welcomed. KRL has earned credibility not only in South East Asia, but also in the Middle East and West Asia. Its regular participation ... has enabled the Laboratories to set up and maintain close cooperation in this vital sector in many countries.

Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce did its part too. In July of 2000 it ran a full-page notice in the English-language Pakistani press that advertised the nuclear-weapons products that Pakistan had to offer: a full line of materials and devices that ended just one step short of a ready-made bomb.

But back to Iran. In the late 1980s there were persistent rumors of secret Pakistani-Iranian nuclear agreements, and as noted, these were systematically denied. In 1991, however, Pakistan's army chief, General Aslam Beg, returned from

to be that of URENCO, the consortium from which Khan had stolen designs. The official reaction in Europe and the United States was "no comment." Hibbs was left to pursue his work alone in his black box.

Unbeknownst to him, the CIA had concluded that the Pakistan-Iran connection had cooled, in part because the centrifuges that Pakistan had sold were castoffs, prone to vibration and inefficient compared with more modern designs. As a result U.S. interest in Khan diminished, and to some extent the trail was allowed to go cold. Hindsight shows that this was a mistake: Khan remained as ambitious as ever, and like a good vendor, he offered improvements to his client. His relations with Iran were solid and all the better because they were out of sight. Throughout that decade, however, as Hibbs occasionally reported, U.S. suspicions remained strong that Iran was continuing to pursue a nuclear-weapons program, with the perhaps unwitting aid of Russia and China, both of which were eager to sell civil nuclear technology to Iran—as they are today.

In 2002 a glimmer of light illuminated Hibbs's black box: a confidential source at the IAEA alerted him to the news that Iran had proceeded so far with a centrifuge program that it was ready to open a production-scale enrichment plant. Hibbs asked if the IAEA had any information on the origin of the design.

His source said, "It's indigenous."

Hibbs didn't believe it. He said, "There's nothing indigenous about a centrifuge program in Iran. There's nothing remotely indigenous about it. It's stolen. Believe me, it's *got* to be stolen."

Hibbs studied the question, and with the shreds of information he painstakingly formed a picture in his mind. He asked himself: How powerful is this machine? How big is it? How much uranium could it conceivably enrich? How fast? And how long has it taken the Iranians to develop

it? He went back to his notes of a decade before, and read all his old files, and finally concluded that it had to be a URENCO design, and was probably from A. Q. Khan. But Hibbs needed some sort of confirmation. With the evidence in hand he went to see another confidential source at a U.S. agency in Washington. They met in a coffee shop. Hibbs is generally diffident, but on this occasion he got right to the point. He said, "Does the U.S. government know where the technology came from?"

His source did not answer right away. Apparently he had not anticipated this question, and he needed time to decide how far to go. The choice was between "no comment" and telling the truth, because only a fool would lie to Mark Hibbs. The man paused for a long while. Finally he said, "Yeah."

Hibbs said, "Where did Iran get it from?"

The top-secret memo found on the chicken farm of Saddam's son-in-law described an approach made to Iraq by a Pakistani who claimed to be an intermediary for Khan, offering to assist with the building of a bomb.

a trip to Tehran openly advocating the export of nuclear-weapons technology to Iran, and pointing to the several billion dollars' worth of state revenue that might be in the offing. He may even have written an opinion piece in an Urdu-language newspaper expressing his enthusiasm for the idea—though in Pakistan recently he denied this to me, and I was unable to track the piece down. Beg is an anti-American with sympathies for Iran, and he says that he is the target of a Jewish conspiracy of lies. Be that as it may, he was told to keep quiet in the early 1990s, presumably because the transfer of blueprints and centrifuges was already under way.

Hibbs was onto it fast. In November of 1991, having previously written about the unconfirmed visits of A. Q. Khan, he described an unnamed Western government's suspicion that Iran had possibly obtained uranium-enrichment technology from Pakistan, and that this technology appeared

Again the man paused. "Well, it's the same ..." He stopped himself. Earlier that year the United States had leaked word that North Korea had received centrifuge designs and possibly prototypes from Pakistan in return for missile technology, in a state-to-state swap. The leak was directed not against Pakistan but against North Korea, which soon restarted its plutonium-reprocessing facilities and expelled IAEA inspectors. In any case, Hibbs's contact decided to go ahead. He said, "There's only one country that's exporting centrifuge technology."

"Do you mean Pakistan?"

"Yeah."

Hibbs said, "You realize, if I trust you on this and flesh this out and write it, there's going to be a shit storm, and basically it's going to be denied everywhere."

"Yeah."

Hibbs wrote it up, and in January of 2003 his editor put it on page one of *Nuclear Fuel*, under the drab Platts-style headline "PAKISTAN BELIEVED DESIGN DATA SOURCE FOR CENTRIFUGES TO BE BUILT BY IRAN." It was the most important work of Hibbs's career to date—a 2,164-word masterpiece that went to the center of Pakistan's activities and with unerring precision mapped the recent history of nuclear proliferation. The reaction, as Hibbs had predicted, amounted to a chorus of official denials—with various professors chiming in to explain why, for cultural or geopolitical reasons, Pakistan would never have helped the Iranians to arm. But Hibbs stood his ground.

Later he said to me, "There was no comment from the IAEA. I continued to interact with the sources of that story. Throughout 2003 they kept telling me, 'You're not only warm and hot but the IAEA is very angry that you are not letting them control the flow of information. They're onto Pakistan. They know that individuals in Pakistan were deeply implicated in this program. But they can't use the "P" word. No one will say "Pakistan." It's all being discreetly negotiated between the IAEA, the United States, and other countries ...'" The problem for the United States was that Pakistan was again now a trusted ally, this time in the effort to destroy al-Qaeda.

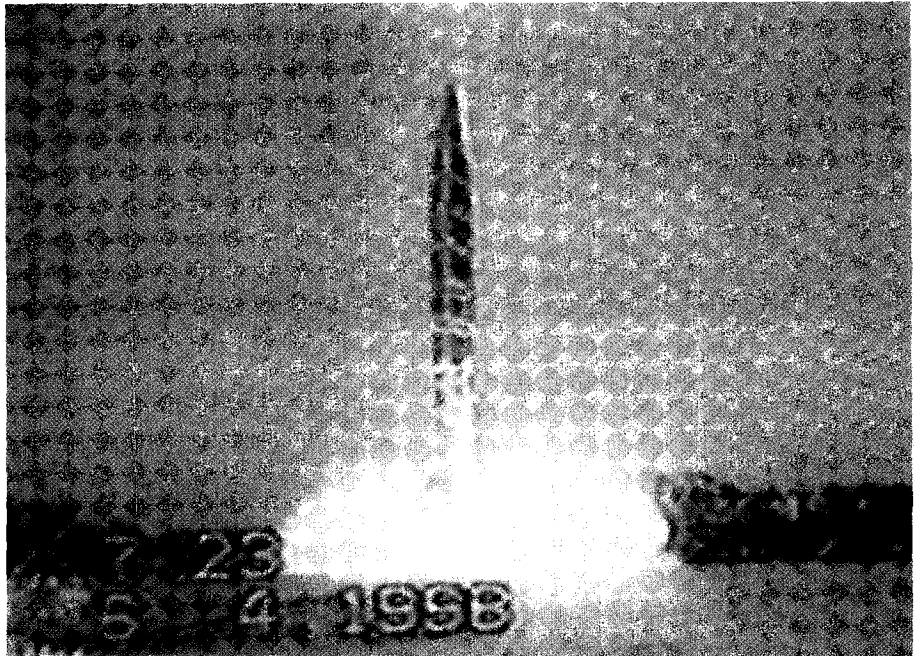
I said, "So they wanted you to pipe down."

Hibbs said, "Anyway, we kept working on Pakistan, and more and more bits of the story got confirmed. I kept fingering Pakistan, fingering Pakistan, and pissing off the IAEA and the U.S. government, because at that time they were saying, 'We want to make a deal with these people. We want to make sure it doesn't get out of control.'"

I said, "The story or the activity?"

"The story. They wanted to control it."

Controlling a story once Hibbs starts into it is not an easy trick, particularly because of the dedicated non-proliferationists within the ranks of government, who refuse to submit to higher political agendas and are therefore sometimes willing to talk. The Bush administration did manage to engineer a partial shelter for Pervez Musharraf, allowing him on behalf of the United States to pursue his "war on terrorism," largely against his own people, along the border with Afghanistan. Nonetheless, across the months of 2003, as revelation led to revelation, it became obvious that A. Q. Khan's nuclear empire, which had long been penetrated yet neglected by the West, was at last starting to fall apart.



April 6, 1998: Pakistan's successful test launch of a Ghauri missile

The trouble over North Korea served as an early warning to Khan—or it could have, had he been wiser and less enamored of himself. Cooperation with the Koreans seems to have dated back to 1992, when Pakistan, having acquired nuclear weapons, cast around for a missile capable of carrying them. Groups of Pakistani engineers and officials made several trips to North Korea to witness test flights of a promising medium-range missile called the NoDong. They later struck a deal. Over the course of the decade North Korea provided Pakistan with prototypes of missiles that were modified and produced at the Khan Research Laboratories, resulting in a successful Pakistani flight just before the tit-for-tat nuclear tests of India and Pakistan in 1998. In return for the missiles Pakistan provided the North Koreans with centrifuge prototypes—the same old URENCO design—and gave them uranium-enrichment and procurement advice. Western intelligence services found out. Behind closed doors in 2000 U.S. officials confronted the Musharraf regime with what they thought was irrefutable evidence (much of it pho-

tographic) of the centrifuge trade. The Pakistanis categorically denied that any such activity had taken place. They looked the Americans in the eye and lied, and they did not care that the Americans knew it. The transfers continued. The Americans persisted, some believing that bombs in the hands of Pyongyang would be more dangerous even than bombs in the hands of Baghdad or Tehran. Eventually Musharraf came up with a convenient answer: while admitting to no wrongdoing by Pakistan or himself, or to any consummated transfers of nuclear technology, he quietly pointed at Khan, essentially for being out of control.

His pointing took the form of a mock investigation. Khan was making frequent trips to the Gulf city-state of Dubai, where, like many other rich Pakistanis, he owned a home, and where increasingly he sought medical care for himself and his wife. Dubai had long served as an offshore trans-shipment hub for the Pakistani nuclear-procurement network, and it served just as well now as a center for the business of nuclear distribution. Khan's

Though it would be politically inconvenient to admit this now, the United States was aware not only of Khan's peddling of nuclear wares to Iran but also of the likely involvement of the army and government of Pakistan.

main collaborator there was a young Sri Lankan named Buhary Syed Abu Tahir—a wholesaler of consumer goods who had warehouses full of televisions and personal computers, and who had supplied air-conditioners to the Khan Research Laboratories before gradually getting involved in the smuggling of nuclear materials. Tahir seems to have been a morally neutral character, friendly to Khan and sympathetic to the aspirations of developing nuclear powers, but motivated primarily by the money to be made as a middleman. Khan did not begrudge him his profits: indeed, he had grown so fond of Tahir that he teased him about his love life and sometimes treated him like a son. But Khan himself remained the great moralist: not averse to personal gain, and delighted to wheel and deal in luxury in Dubai, but convinced that whatever he did he did for Pakistan.

Khan was therefore dumbfounded, upon returning from a short trip to Dubai in 2000, when Musharraf, having called him in for a conversation, told him that he had been under surveillance by Pakistani agents and that there were concerns about financial improprieties. Financial improprieties? In the world of Khan the word had lost all meaning. There was no question of going to prison, but in 2001, just days short of his sixty-fifth birthday, A. Q. Khan was gently relieved of his command, forced to retire with honors from

his cherished laboratory, and "promoted" to the position of scientific adviser to Musharraf. This last was a particularly nice touch. There is evidence that the exchanges with North Korea continued for at least another year. When the Bush administration finally decided to go public with its concerns about the North Koreans' nuclear-weapons program, it delayed leaking the intelligence information until late October of 2002, after Congress had given its approval for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The blundering that fall defies belief: while dragging the United States into a disastrous war in the pursuit of phantom weapons programs in Iraq, the U.S. government condoned the tangible actions of Pakistan—which, as any reader of Hibbs would have known, was delivering nuclear-weapons capabilities into the hands of America's most significant enemies, including regimes with overt connections to Islamist terrorists. Before the attacks on New York and Washington, Musharraf himself had accommodated Osama bin Laden, had supported the Taliban, and had used international *jihadis*

against the Indians in Kashmir and beyond. But times had changed, and by October of 2002 Musharraf was Washington's friend, engaged in trying to suppress the Islamist idea by gunning it down. It was useful that with his move against Khan he had partially protected himself from revelations of Pakistan's trade in nuclear technology. Secretary of State Colin

Powell spoke with Musharraf, and afterward, when asked on ABC television about Pakistan's assistance to North Korea, said, "President Musharraf gave me his assurance in that conversation, as he has previously, that Pakistan is not doing anything of that nature ... The past is the past. I am more concerned about what is going on now. We have a new relationship with Pakistan."

The past was the past, but it bore a striking resemblance to the present. Khan had been removed from the laboratories, but as the U.S. government must have known full well, he continued to run Pakistan's nuclear networks and to pursue that business all over the world. Khan was vulnerable now, a man positioned to take a fall; but he had become so stupid about himself that apparently he did not believe it, and in any case he was busy. Along with filling the import orders for Pakistan's ongoing nuclear-weapons programs and arranging for exports to Iran and North Korea, he was now occupied with Libya as well. The Libyans had long desired nuclear arms, and like the Saudis, they may have helped to underwrite Pakistan's original uranium-enrichment efforts, in the vague hope that Pakistan would produce a "Muslim" bomb to be shared. That didn't work out. But by the late 1990s, with Pakistan expressing its willingness to make deals, the terms were



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clear: solidarity aside, it was cash that counted, and foreign governments could simply buy the components necessary to become self-sustaining nuclear powers. Libya decided to proceed. Emissaries from Tripoli met with Khan and Tahir in Istanbul, and later in Casablanca and Dubai, to hash out the details. Libya is a primitive Saharan society, only a half step beyond the traditions of nomadic life, and less capable technologically than any other nuclear aspirant to date. Khan must have said to the Libyans that this did not matter—and given the Europeans' earlier doubts about Pakistan's own competence, he may have believed it. In any case, he offered to equip Libya with a turnkey operation, including all the facilities necessary to enrich uranium and ultimately to build bombs. The asking price was \$100 million, which was a bargain for Libya, considering the international muscle that a nuclear arsenal would provide.

When Libya agreed, Khan turned, as usual, to his European suppliers; with their assistance, by 2000 he was installing dozens of centrifuges in a pilot plant on the outskirts of Tripoli. That same year he arranged for the delivery (either through North Korea or directly from Pakistan) of gasified uranium that, if fed in closed loops through the centrifuges, would eventually be sufficient to fuel perhaps a single atomic bomb. The gasified uranium was kept in storage and apparently was never used. This was a pattern throughout the program in Libya, which proved unable to

program, and mentioned guardedly that such an effort required substantial assistance from abroad. It is known now that British intelligence was tracking the Libyans carefully, and it can be presumed that the CIA had not forgotten about Khan. Three months later, in December, Tahir set up a shop southeast of Kuala Lumpur to manufacture certain narrow-tolerance centrifuge parts for the Libyan contract. The shop was created as a subsidiary of a company owned in large part by the Malaysian prime minister's son, a youngish man named Kamaluddin Abdullah. A spokesman later said that the company's managers had not understood the nature of the parts. A Malaysian police investigation duly cleared Kamaluddin of wrongdoing in 2004, with the acquiescence of the United States. Tahir had married the daughter of a Malaysian diplomat, at a society wedding in 1998 attended by Khan, and she, too, was involved in the venture—though also innocently, she later claimed. The company was called Scomi Precision Engineering. To oversee the production Tahir hired a Swiss engineer named Urs Tinner—the son of a man alleged to be a longtime supplier to Khan, Friedrich Tinner. It has been reported in Switzerland that Urs Tinner was turned by the CIA, and that the parts he was producing for Tahir were intentionally faulty, but this runs counter to the official American assertions of U.S. ignorance and uninvolvedness, and it has been impossible to verify. Either

way, in December of 2002 centrifuge components began to arrive in Libya in large numbers.

Khan kept flying around, making deals, and enjoying life. Among other, more serious outings, he had taken to visiting Timbuktu, in Mali, where he would arrive in chartered airplanes with groups of his proliferationist friends, and where he funded

Prime Minister Musharraf ducked into the same defensive position he had used before. He launched an official investigation and began hauling in Khan's staff for questioning. It was time for Khan to disappear for good.

absorb all the equipment it had bought, and left much of it lying unassembled in shipping crates. Nonetheless, Khan pushed forward on multiple fronts. The pilot plant was of course just the start. What Libya ultimately required was a sustained and efficient production line involving thousands of linked centrifuges backed up by the ultra-precise computerized machine tools necessary to make replacement parts and an unending supply of bombs. The machine-tool installations were to be provided primarily by Khan's European suppliers, but with help from certain Turks known to him from the past. The centrifuges themselves were to be manufactured in pieces by various companies around the world, including at least one created solely for that purpose by Tahir and Khan.

In the first week of September 2001, six months after Khan's forced retirement in Pakistan and several days before the terrorist attacks on the United States, the CIA issued a report that Libya had revived its nuclear-weapons

the construction of a small hotel named the Hendrina Khan, after his wife. Apparently nothing nefarious was going on. In fact, it was such grand fun that one member of his entourage wrote a book about it, titled *Timbuktu*, which was full of praise for the great A. Q. and offered such helpful advice as not to bother visiting the Bamako zoo. But in 2003 such freedoms were coming to an end. With the IAEA having revealed the existence of secret centrifuges in Iran, and with Mark Hibbs standing on the sidelines repeatedly fingering Pakistan, the political pressures on Musharraf kept mounting. For Khan the collapse came in the second half of 2003, as the result of a complex series of events. The problems started in June, when IAEA inspectors found traces of highly enriched uranium on the surface of ancillary equipment in Iran. Iranian officials, who had been denying U.S. claims that Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons, were put in the awkward position of having to explain away the evidence; they admitted that the equip-

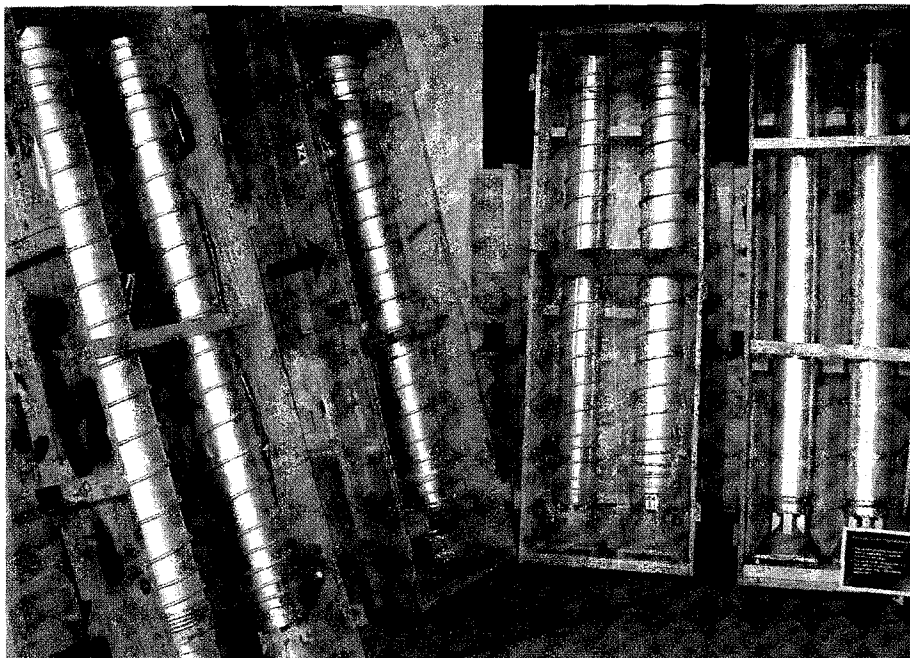
ment was secondhand, and said that it had been imported from another country. In August IAEA inspectors found similar traces at another site, and the Iranians went further toward blaming Pakistan, without quite doing it by name.

Meanwhile, Libya's leader, Muammar Qaddafi, who had decided to normalize relations with the West, was involved in secret talks with Great Britain and the United States about dismantling his programs for weapons of mass destruction. In October of 2003, apparently, the British and the Americans decided to give him a push: they intercepted a ship called the *BBC China*, which was known to have left Dubai and passed through the Suez Canal carrying nuclear-weapons equipment destined for Libya. The intercept itself was a low-key affair: it amounted to a phone call to the ship's German owners requesting that they divert their vessel to an Italian port for an inspection. The request was backed up by the presence of a U.S. warship, but perhaps unnecessarily, since the ship's owners were innocent businessmen with nothing to hide. In Italy the inspection turned up five containers holding thousands of centrifuge parts manufactured in Malaysia by Scomi Precision Engineering (and packed in wooden crates boldly bearing the company's name), along with other components manufactured in Turkey and paperwork showing that the trans-shipment through Dubai had been arranged by the enterprising Tahir. To the intelligence agents involved none of this would have come as a surprise.

Nor would Khan have been surprised that Pakistan's operations had been penetrated. He had been working under that assumption for decades without slowing down, and the loss of five containers, or even of the Scomi facility in Malaysia, would normally not have fazed him at all. But in a larger sense now he was losing control. In Libya the intercept of the *BBC China* was seen as an inconvenient event because it amounted to being caught red-handed. It is necessary to discount the Bush administration's subsequent claim that Qaddafi was chastened by the invasion of Iraq, because by late 2003 the lack of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction was already becoming a major public embarrassment, and the U.S. military in Iraq was clearly bogged down. More likely, Qaddafi, far from being impressed by Washington's resolve, was invigorated by the depths of its blunder. Nonetheless, he had decided to do business with the world, particularly with the nearby moralists of Europe, and soon after the *BBC China* seizure he gave up on his nuclear-weapons program—at least temporarily.

In December of 2003 the Libyans accepted the arrival of

IAEA inspectors and others and began to answer questions about Libya's arrangement with Pakistan. They were more forthcoming than the Iranians had been. They provided dates, named names, opened their facilities, and eventually even allowed the equipment to be flown away, under IAEA control, to warehouses in the United States. Their centrifuges were mostly unassembled and incomplete, but they were of the same proven URENCO design as those in Iran—and at least similar to those being built in North Korea, and to those perhaps being considered in Egypt, Syria, Saudi



March 2004: Confiscated components of Libya's nuclear-weapons program on display

Arabia, and countries beyond. In December the news got out, with mention of the various cross-connections, and was published in the major American papers. How much worse could it get? In January of 2004, having certainly made photocopies first, the Libyans handed over bags from an Islamabad laundry that contained the plans for a Chinese-designed implosion bomb just like Pakistan's. On the margins were handwritten notes in English disparaging the hated Munir Ahmed Khan. Clearly these plans had come from the Khan Research Laboratories, and possibly from A. Q. Khan himself.

Musharraf ducked into the same defensive position he had used before. He launched an official investigation and began hauling in Khan's staff for questioning. The conclusion was known from the start: after nearly six years of warnings, beginning with the snubs Khan had received on the day of the test explosions in 1998 and continuing through his dismissal from the laboratories in 2001, it was finally time for Khan to disappear for good. Before checking out, however, he had one last service to provide to the regime, and if he did it right, technically speaking his life would be spared. On February 4, 2004, after days of persua-

sion in Islamabad, he appeared on television and absolved everyone but himself of blame. Speaking in English, a language that relatively few Pakistanis understand, he said,

"My dear ladies and gentlemen, Assalam-ul Alaikum, it is with the deepest sense of sorrow, anguish, and regret that I have chosen to appear before you in order to atone for some of the anguish and pain that have been suffered with the people of Pakistan on account of the extremely unfortunate events of the last two months. I am aware of the vital criticality of Pakistan's nuclear program to

upon me. However, it pains me to realize in retrospect that my entire lifetime achievements of providing foolproof national security to my nation could have been placed in serious jeopardy on account of my activities which were based in good faith but on errors of judgment related to unauthorized proliferation activities.

"I wish to place on record that those of my subordinates who have accepted their role in the affair were acting in good faith like me on my instructions.

"I also wish to clarify that there was never ever any kind of authorization for these activities by the government.

"I take full responsibility for my actions, and seek your pardon.

"I give an assurance, my dear brothers and sisters, such activities will never take place in the future.

"I also appeal to all citizens of Pakistan in the supreme national interest to refrain from any further speculations and not to politicize this extremely sensitive issue of national security.

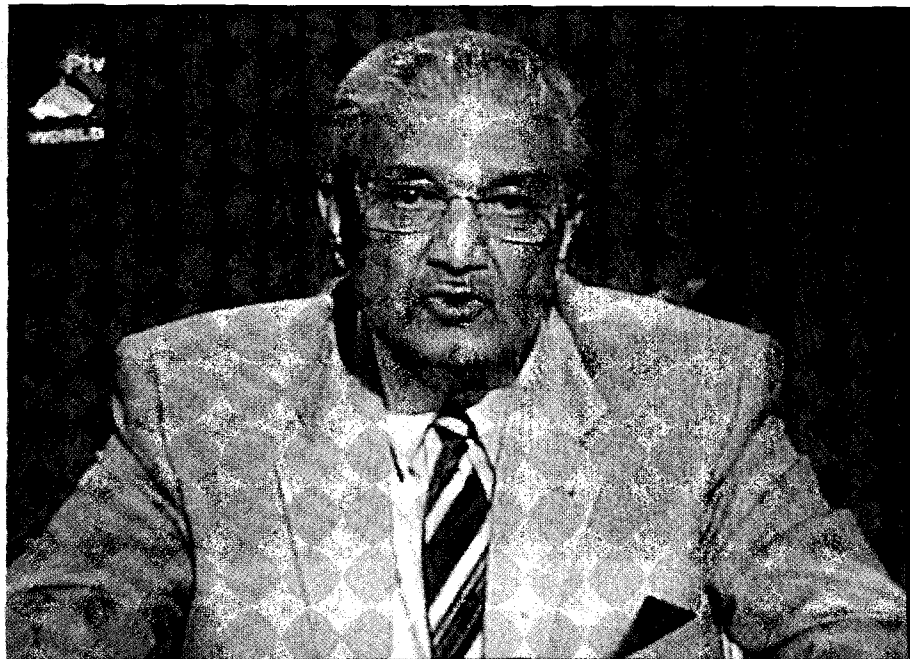
"May Allah keep Pakistan safe and secure. Long Live Pakistan!"

Khan then disappeared into his house, perhaps never to reappear. The official Pakistani investigation continued, occasionally producing the news that Khan was to blame. Several of Khan's staff members were placed under house arrest as well, one of whom has not yet been released. Outside Pakistan there was a bit more progress. Tahir was arrested in Malaysia but was not made available to representatives of the IAEA for the first nine months. The

Malaysians eventually cleared themselves of wrongdoing. Urs Tinner was arrested in Germany and extradited to Switzerland, where he remains jailed while under investigation. Germany is trying to prosecute one of Khan's alleged German suppliers, a man named Gotthard Lerch, and Holland is trying the same against another of Khan's longtime associates—but both cases are in trouble. South Africa, which turns out to have been an important supplier to the Libyans, is trying halfheartedly to go after some of its own citizens. Meanwhile, Qaddafi has been mumbling about having cut a bad deal with the West, and both Iran and North Korea are rapidly arming, despite various assertions and diplomatic maneuvers that raise the possibility that they might stop. As for the United States, it keeps repeating its exquisite claim of ignorance: that for all those years it knew practically nothing about the activities of the dangerous A. Q. Khan.

But with or without the CIA, readers of Mark Hibbs have long known what was going on. He is a disciplined reporter who sticks closely to the news, but people with a sense for his beat—this world of nuclear secrets—draw as much from reading between his lines. Last September, for instance, under the headline "PAKISTAN SAYS ITS ROLE IN PROBING KHAN'S

PTV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



February 4, 2004: A. Q. Khan takes the fall on Pakistan state television

our national security and the national pride and emotion which it generates in your heart. I am also conscious that any untoward event, incident, or threat to this national security draws the greatest concern in the nation's psyche. It is in this context that the recent international events and their fallout on Pakistan have traumatized the nation.

"I have much to answer for. The recent investigation was ordered with the government of Pakistan consequent to the disturbing disclosures and evidence by some countries to international agencies relating to alleged proliferation activities by certain Pakistanis and foreigners over the last two decades.

"The investigations have established that many of the reported activities did occur, and these were inevitably initiated at my behest.

"In my interviews with the concerned government officials I was confronted with the evidence and findings, and I have voluntarily admitted that much of it is true and accurate.

"My dear brothers and sisters, I have chosen to appear before you to offer my deepest regrets and unqualified apologies to a traumatized nation. I am aware of the high esteem, love, and affection in which you have held me for my services to national security, and I am grateful for all the awards and honor that have been bestowed

Because I can read,
I can understand. I can write a letter.
I can fill out a job application.
I can finally get off welfare.

Because I can read,
I can learn. I can help my daughter
with her homework,
I can inspire her to be better.
I can be a role model.

Because I can read,
I can succeed, I can
contribute. I can live
my life without fear,
without shame.
I can be whatever
I want to be.

Because I can read.



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PROLIFERATION IS FINISHED,” he led with two apparently simple sentences (one a lovely quote) that are memorable as much for the questions they intentionally left unanswered as for Hibbs’s statement of the facts. Hibbs wrote,

The Pakistan government said Aug. 29 that its interrogation of [A. Q.] Khan, former head of Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), about his involvement in proliferating Pakistan’s nuclear technology abroad has been completed. “As far as we are concerned, I understand that whatever information that was there has been obtained and has been shared with the relevant countries, and [that] the relevant countries are satisfied with the information,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Naeem Khan told a weekly press briefing.

The investigation was over? All available information had been obtained? It had been shared? With relevant countries? Which countries were they? Who chose them, anyway? And what about Khan? Since Musharraf had already pardoned him, and he had now confessed everything he knew, what was the reason for his continuing house arrest and his ongoing isolation from Western intelligence and the press? Hibbs did not address these questions for a reason quite obvious to his readers: Pakistan’s investigation was a cover-up and a sham—moreover, of a sort possible only in a morally bankrupt and corrupt nation where cowardly and illegitimate rulers, propped up by huge infusions of American dollars and dependent on their soldiers’ guns, suppress genuine inquiries because they themselves would be implicated and, in the embarrassment that followed, would be cut off from foreign aid and driven from power by their own people, who almost universally now detest them. The problem for the United States, and conceivably for Europe, is that those doing the driving would most likely be Islamists, who are growing in strength and numbers even as they are being hunted down. The Iranians will probably beat them to it, but if the Islamists in Pakistan took power tomorrow, they would be the first Islamists with nuclear bombs. Hibbs trusted his readers to know all this and more when he wrote about the sham investigation’s end. To me in Bonn he simply chuckled and said, “Ah, Pakistan.”

But strictly in terms of nuclear proliferation there is the question of what good a genuine investigation would do anyway—as Hibbs understands in full and painful detail. There would be the immediate frustrations that Khan’s network was spread around, that it operated in the gray areas of national laws, and that prosecutions would be undermined by political sympathies even if unambiguously illegal acts could be proved. More difficult still, however, is the very nature of such a network, which is

not a rigid structure that can be shattered and shut down but, rather, something more like the Internet—a vast and informal web of infinitely flexible connections, capable of reshaping itself with ease, and able therefore to sustain enormous damage without suffering significant loss of efficiency. A. Q. Khan did not create his nuclear-weapons network so much as discover it as a pre-existing condition of the modern world.

Mubashir Hasan, the pacifist and former finance minister in Lahore, told me he worries that Pakistan, like the United States, is the sort of country that would actually use its atomic bombs. He said he had once asked Pakistan’s leaders when they thought such use would be justified.

One said, “When we are threatened enough.”

“But when will you be threatened enough? If India takes Lahore?”

“We don’t know.”

“But if you throw a bomb, and India throws two bombs back in return, what then?”

“So what?” the man said. “Then we die.”

Hasan was more surprised by this logic than I am. Once a country has a bomb, it must be determined to use it.

In Islamabad I met a smart man close to the military who recognized this risk and the wild-card problem, which is that Pakistan’s command-and-control leaves much to be desired.

A nuclear network like Khan’s is not a rigid structure that can be shattered and shut down but, rather, something more like the Internet—a vast and informal web of flexible connections, capable of reshaping itself with ease.

He said, “The best way to fight proliferation is to pursue global disarmament. Fine, great, sure—if you expect that to happen. But you cannot have a world order in which you have five or eight nuclear-weapons states on the one hand, and the rest of the international community on the other. There are many places like Pakistan, poor countries that have legitimate security concerns—every bit as legitimate as yours. And yet you ask them to address those concerns without nuclear weapons—while you have nuclear weapons *and* you have everything else? It is not a question of what is fair, or right or wrong. It is simply not going to work.”

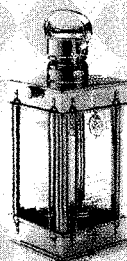
The man was right, of course. A. Q. Khan proved it once, and then three times over again. There will be other Khans in the future. Shifted to America, and stripped of its postcolonial indignation, the point becomes an argument not for standing down from the diplomacy of nuclear non-proliferation but for stoically finding a way to deal in parallel with the reality of a world in which many countries have acquired atomic bombs, and some may use them. ▀



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THAN MONEY, INFLUENCE OR SPIN.
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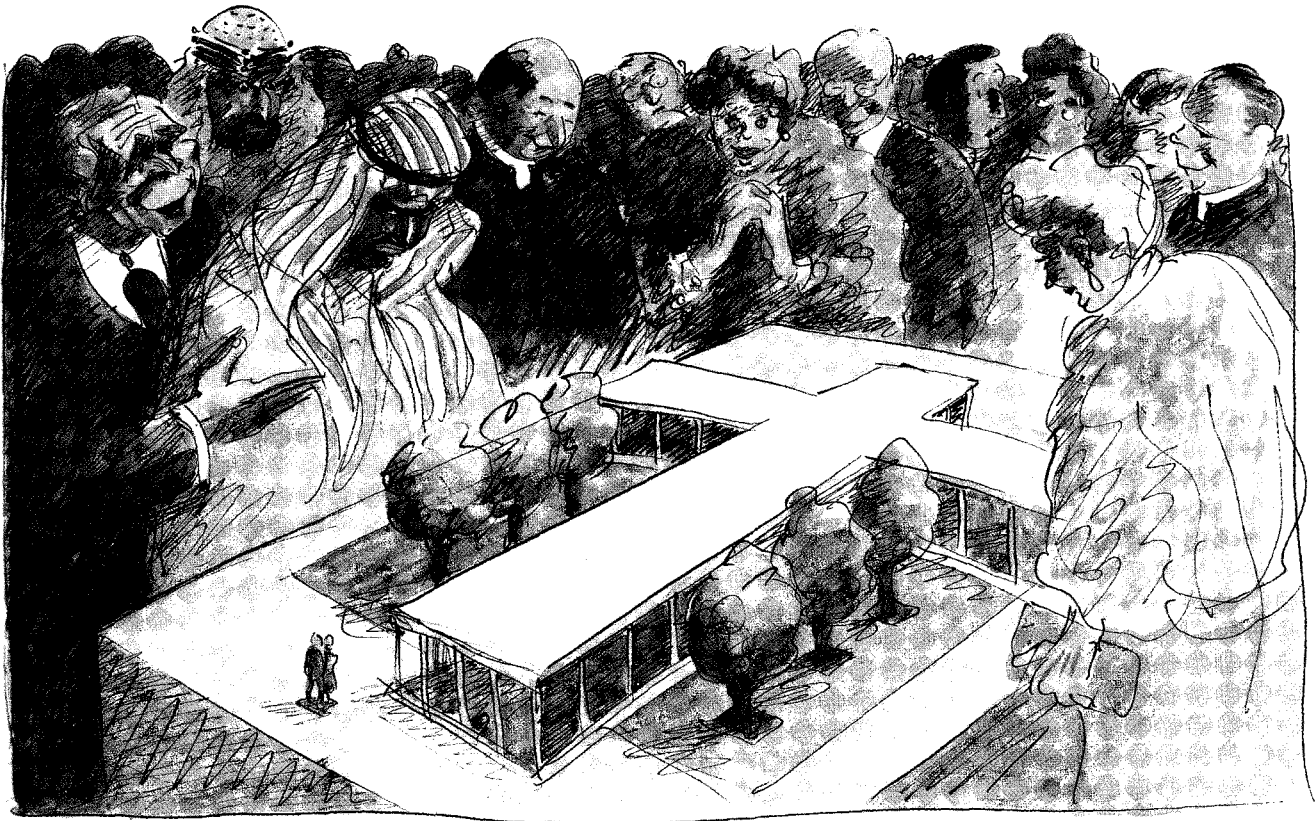
THE GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

An unauthorized preview, with never-before-seen drawings of the interior

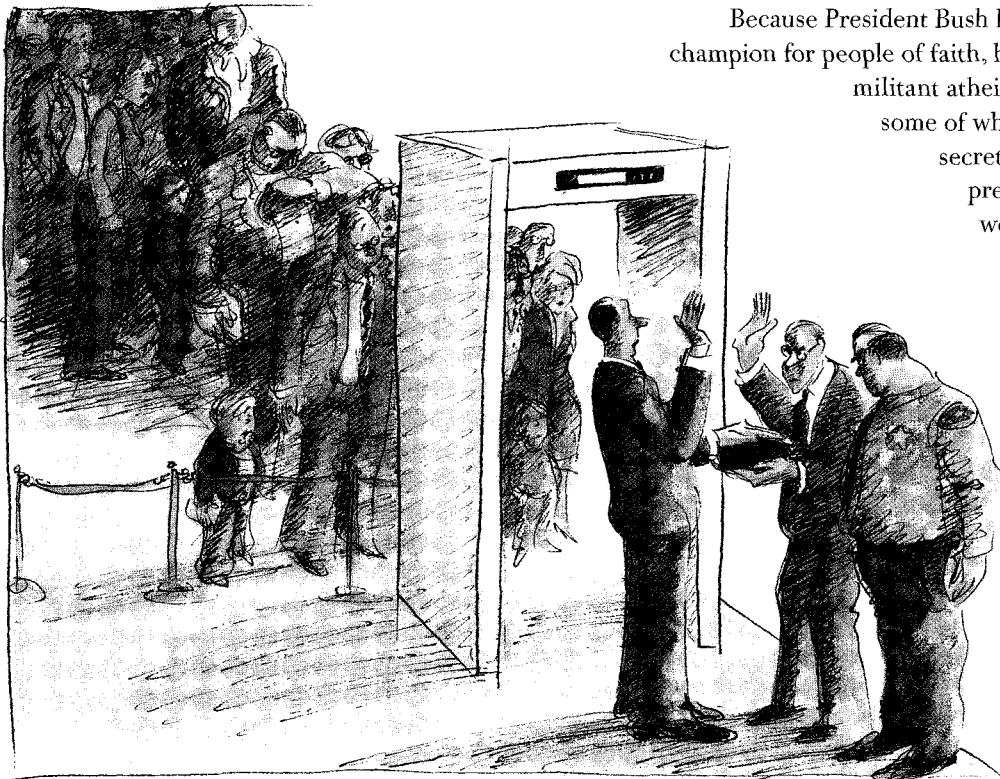
BY EDWARD SOREL AND CULLEN MURPHY



IN THE AUTUMN OF 2005, when George W. Bush had fallen victim to an avalanche of problems, and public confidence was at its lowest ebb, the president's aides were puzzled to see him take a sudden, obsessive interest in planning his presidential library. He would speak of his vision for the library at cabinet meetings, with heads of state, and even while watching NASCAR races. At first those close to him were at a loss to understand his urgency in this matter, but they soon concluded that the president was following some Divine Instruction, imparted to him in a mysterious manner that only he understood, which required him to draw up plans *without delay*.



Within weeks the White House announced that the official repository of the forty-third president would be erected on the campus of an evangelical university in Texas, and that the cost would run to about \$200 million. One unnamed source says that a secret reception for potential donors had already been held at Halliburton's Houston headquarters, where a model of the library—designed by the head of the art department at Oral Roberts University—was unveiled. The president was careful to assure his Arab guests that despite the building's shape (a "neo-fundamentalist exploration of the cruciform vernacular," in the words of the architect), *all* denominations would, of course, be welcome.



Because President Bush has been such a courageous champion for people of faith, he has earned the enmity of militant atheists in the Democratic Party, some of whom (according to defectors secretly interrogated by the vice-president's office) may possess weapons of mass destruction.

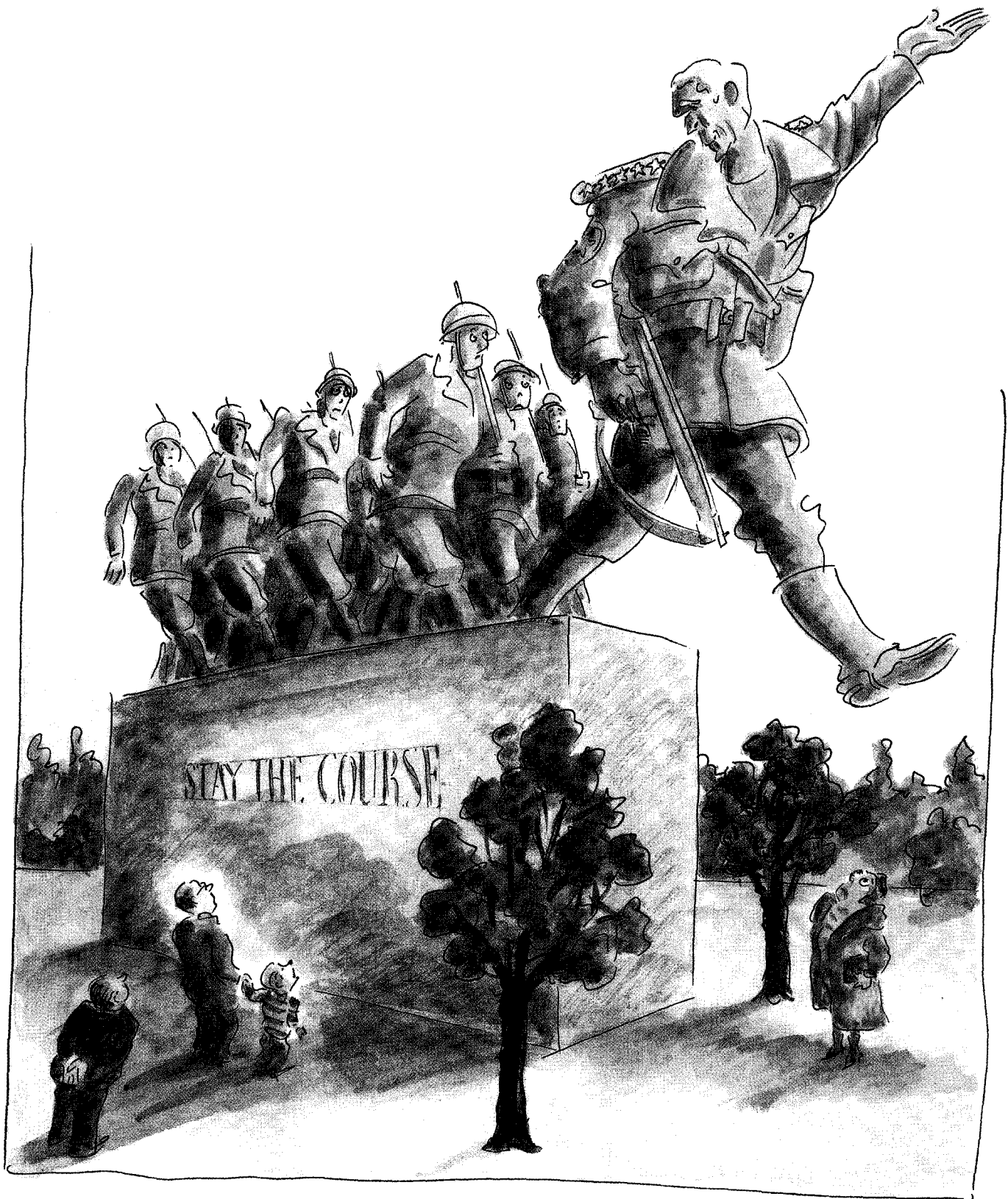
It will therefore be necessary to insist that all visitors undergo a thorough security check before entering the building. In addition to walking through metal detectors, adults who are not wearing an American-flag lapel pin will be required to take a loyalty oath.



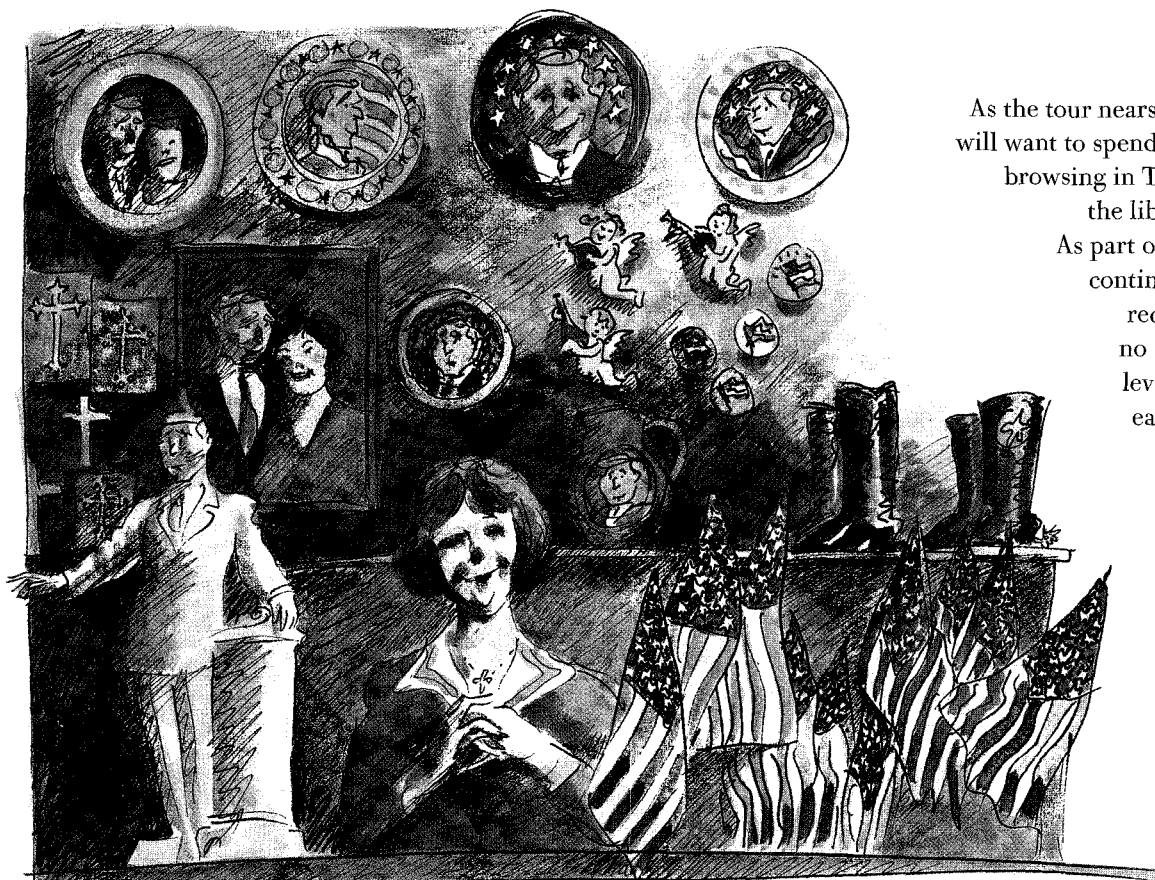
Once inside, visitors will be greeted by a mural of our Founding Fathers signing the Declaration of Independence. In many ways it is an exact copy of the famous painting by John Trumbull, but with some slight improvements over the original.



Although we do not yet know how many administration officials leaked the name of Valerie Plame, or how many will be indicted for this or similar services to the nation, a Martyr's Monument to the fallen will anchor one end of the Esplanade of Honor.



This imposing greensward, visible from the observation deck of the Pavilion of Intelligent Design, will sweep down to the Operation Iraqi Freedom shrine. Although the exact design of the shrine remains to be determined, it will be set amid the "Greet Us With Flowers" wetland, a gift of the Cheney family.



As the tour nears its end, visitors will want to spend a few moments browsing in The Green Zone, the library's gift shop. As part of the president's continuing economic-recovery program, no sales tax will be levied on shoppers earning \$500,000 or more a year.

Thy Visa and MasterCard Honored Here

Before leaving the library, visitors will have an opportunity to vote for which of the president's initiatives they would most like to see immortalized on a postage stamp. All ballots and comments will be kept secret unless subpoenaed by the Department of Homeland Security.



Edward Sorel lives in Manhattan. His Literary Lives series, which ran in The Atlantic over the past few years, will be published as a collection this spring by Bloomsbury. Cullen Murphy is the managing editor of The Atlantic.

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NORTH AND SOUTH

Selections from the notebooks of Elizabeth Bishop

.....

KEY WEST

I

They have set up the carnival, the carnival,
 In the back lot of the burnt-out cigar factory.
 And the high-diver, before he leaps to his canvas pool
 From the ladder festooned with colored lights, can see
 Down into the ruins, and then all over the town,
 Over the tin roofs to the blacked-out ocean,
 The surrounding water, like sheets of carbon paper,
 Used and re-used. With displays of mock emotion
 He sets a match to himself: flaming, he falls
 Like a wagon of war past the gutted stucco walls.

II

Where six hundred men used to work at rolling cigars
 To fill the boxes with the ornate lids
 That showed a woman with roses in her hair
 And tulle-draped bust—a woman like her bids
 The citizens to come and see her dancers
 Guaranteed to wear nothing but feather fans and jewels,
 And a man with the face of an educated ape
 Lures them to see the educated mules.
 While Negro children, who are not allowed,
 Look on solemnly from among the crowd.

FLORIDA

Look at the Lears upon the beach!
 No beards, but gray hairs on their chests
 Like city-snow,
 All gently blow.
 Each upon his elbow rests,
 With a young lady stretched by each,

 In pale blue tights her lovely form;
 Ophelia prostrate by the sea
 Casts large, sad eyes on
 The bright horizon.
 The sun invades all those who flee
 Far from the love affair, far from the storm.

JUST NORTH OF BOSTON

Winter twilight: miles of advertising.
 —One doesn't know whether to laugh or cry.
 Lights chasing each other round and round;
 lights running at us screaming letters.
 If only we didn't know how to read,
 or if they screamed Chinese or Arabic,
 would we consider them beautiful?
 You say "It's possible."
 But look—an 18th-century man-of-war
 has run aground: She's struggling there
 against the rocks, her lights still lit,

 directing rescue operations. No—
 it's worse: it's *half* a man-of-war.
 Now come the wedding clothes for rent:
 six brides are standing in a row,
 dresses agleam like glare-ice; next, their grooms,
 with ruffled shirt-fronts, pink or blue,
 all on a brilliant stage, on stilts.
 How can they meet? When will they marry?
 Gold! *Gold*. A Burmese temple? Balinese?
 An Oriental-something roof, with grinning
 dragons. Just beyond,
 an ice-cream cone *à gratte-ciel*
 outlined in glowing yellow, glowing rose
 on top—the ice cream—strawberry.
 Twelve Hereford steer, three Hereford calves
 of sturdy plaster are deployed ...

FOR M.B.S., BURIED IN NOVA SCOTIA

Yes, you are dead now and live
 only there, in a little, slightly tip-tilted graveyard
 where all of your childhood's Christmas trees are forgathered
 with the present they meant to give,
 and your childhood's river quietly curls at your side
 and breathes deep with each tide.

Elizabeth Bishop (1911–1979) published her first collection of poems, North & South, in 1946. Her next book, a combined volume titled Poems: North & South—A Cold Spring, was awarded the 1955 Pulitzer Prize. Her subsequent collections, Questions of Travel (1965) and Geography III (1976), received the National Book Award and the National Book Critics' Circle Award. These previously unpublished poems appear in a new edition of Bishop's writing, Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box: Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments, edited by Alice Quinn.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

STATE OF THE UNION



Why the Culture War Is the Wrong War

by E.J. Dionne Jr.

Tribal Relations

by Steven Waldman and John C. Green

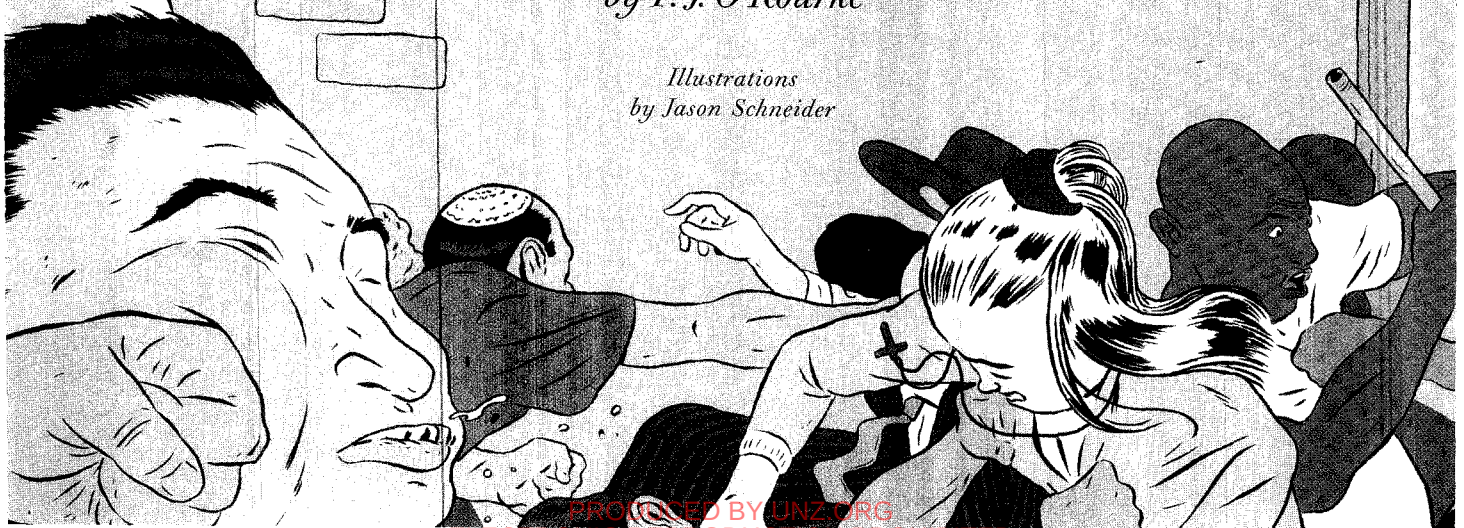
Misfit America *by Paul Starobin*

Executive Privilege *by Clive Crook*

Two Cheers for Hypocrisy

by P.J. O'Rourke

*Illustrations
by Jason Schneider*



The Values Racket

Since the 2004 presidential election differences in American values and cultural attitudes have been continually picked at like a scab in Congress and the media. From the hand-wringing over the “values vote” to the shouting about Terri Schiavo, the nuclear option, intelligent design, and Samuel Alito, the culture war has apparently resumed, after a brief post-9/11 armistice. Beneath the clamor the national consciousness seems broadly, if quietly, uneasy. Much of the news in the past year or so—political scandal, corporate malfeasance, prisoner torture—has prompted questions about American ideals.

For this, *The Atlantic*’s fourth annual State of the Union special section, we asked prominent writers and thinkers to consider the state of American values: how they clash, how they’re changing, and how they interact with our politics, business, and everyday life. The resulting essays describe the social and moral health of the nation as decidedly mixed.

The most reassuring theme that emerges is a surprising unity of belief among most Americans on most cultural issues. As E. J. Dionne, Steven Waldman, and John C. Green argue, the spectacle of culture war masks widespread agreement on even supposedly polarizing issues such as abortion and gay rights. Waldman and Green show that regarding religion, values, and politics, America divides not into two mutually antagonistic nations but into twelve “tribes” with overlapping values and cultural attitudes. Few of these tribes have much appetite for the culture war.

Indeed, Dionne argues that the real war in America is between those who want a culture war—a vocal minority demanding political attention—and those who don’t. Most Americans are happy with the legal status quo on most issues relating to moral values and individual freedoms. This consensus is likely to strictly limit any enduring changes to the status quo—no matter which party holds office.

But if values are not really pulling us apart, we may be drifting (together) in an unsettling direction. As Paul Starobin argues, the United States has become isolated by its values. Many of the cultural attributes that have made America attractive to outsiders—boisterous democracy, economic opportunity, respect for human rights—have proliferated abroad. Some have been tarnished at home. At the same time, many of the values that remain uniquely American do not endear us to most other societies. No other country is both as devout and as libertarian as America,

and this unusual mixture has of late exacerbated mistrust of the United States. Whether out of disdain for America’s moral certitude, fear of its evangelical impulses, or discomfort with its social permissiveness, nearly all the world’s countries find something alien about American culture that—when combined with American power and assertiveness—leads to misgivings about American ends.

The culture war tends to fixate on sexual, reproductive, and religious issues. But Dionne argues that the more widespread sources of moral and cultural tension in the United States today are the loss of community, alteration of the rhythms of family life, and growth in self-centered individualism that have been wrought by rapid changes in our economy. Americans are responding to these changes, seeking (and often finding) new forms of community and new ways to uphold old virtues. But the struggle between individualism and communitarianism, between old values and a new economy, has left many people uneasy and conflicted, regardless of their political ideology.

One area in which economic change has caused values to deteriorate is business, Clive Crook argues. Corporate scandals and outlandish executive pay increases have continued well past the end of the stock-market boom. The reason is not that the captains of American industry are any less virtuous than they used to be but that our economy has evolved in a way that makes oversight of CEOs considerably more difficult; and absent oversight, the worst sorts of human behavior tend to flourish. Crook argues that unseemly executive behavior may well be a price worth paying for America’s continued economic dynamism; in any event, it should not be expected to diminish anytime soon.

Indeed, whatever one thinks of American values now, we may well be stuck with them for a while: today’s teens appear unlikely to foment a values revolution, as P. J. O’Rourke argues in his own inimitable way. Unlike Boomers when they were young, or even Generation X, these kids largely hew to the moral, social, and spiritual beliefs of their presumably proud parents. They are politically moderate, respectful of traditional institutions, and somewhat sexually cautious—at least if you believe what they tell you. There is more than a whiff of blithe hypocrisy to teen cultural attitudes today; the young say one thing, do another, and perhaps think a third. On balance, that should prepare them well for adult life in America. —THE EDITORS

Planning for catastrophes is positive thinking.



NOT DOING SO IS A DISASTER.

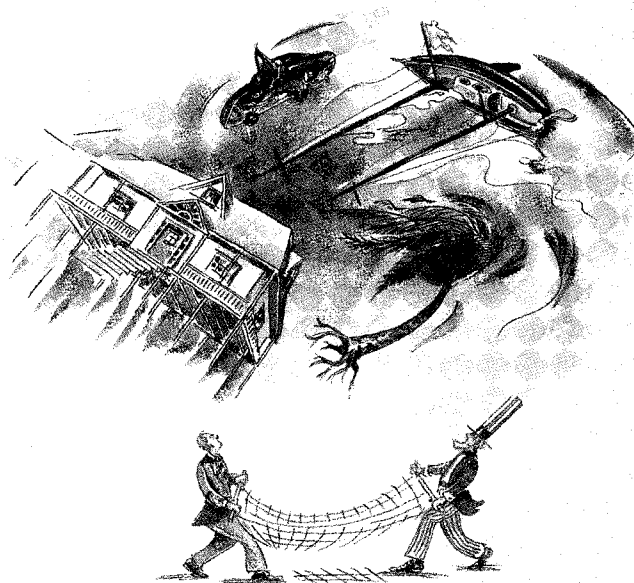
It takes time, money, and imagining the unimaginable. **But if we don't do it now, we'll regret it later.** Here are a few steps we can immediately take to better prepare and protect America:

1. STRENGTHEN FIRST RESPONDERS.

We need to build additional capacity into local police and fire departments so the situation can be stabilized, human suffering minimized, and further property damage prevented.

2. **BETTER UNDERSTAND THE GROWING RISKS.** More people are moving into areas that are at higher risk for natural disasters. And many who do, choose not to buy the additional protection they may need.

3. **CREATE CATASTROPHE FUNDS.** The public and private sectors must work together to create a financial backstop program at the state and federal level that can provide consumers more protection at lower cost.



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Why the Culture War Is the Wrong War

It's time to challenge the metaphor—and the easy caricatures of left and right that sustain it

BY E. J. DIONNE JR.

Is there a culture war in the United States? Of course. There always has been and always will be.

Those who battle today over gay marriage or abortion might usefully remember our unusual national experiment with banning the sale of alcohol, one of America's defining cultural moments. It pitted self-control (or puritanism) against pleasure (or self-indulgence), immigrants against the native-born, Protestants against Catholics—and, yes, Protestants against Protestants, the drinking Lutherans and Episcopalians against the abstemious Baptists and Methodists. This being America, even the moralists had a sense of humor about themselves. "They pray for Prohibition," went the ditty, "and then they vote for gin."

Of course we have culture wars, because there are so many different kinds of us. The Scots-Irish and the Yankees created very different cultures and different forms of politics: witness the long-standing historical differences between New Hampshire and Vermont. When Irish and Italian immigrants weren't battling each other, they were fighting the old-family English, a.k.a. the WASP establishment. When the establishment ran short on votes, it enlisted one immigrant group or another—the Italians in New York, the French-Canadians in New England—to battle the Irish or some other rising culture.

Of course we have culture wars, because the great nation to our south is Spanish-speaking. Mexican-Americans have been part of us from the beginning—from before the beginning, actually, since some of our country is conquered Mexican territory. They are thoroughly American, no less assimilated than Italians were a century ago. But they also have a culture and language of their own, and that makes some Anglos uneasy.

Of course we have culture wars, because we have always been a nation in which big-city values fight the values of the countryside. "Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic," declared William Jennings Bryan, the Great Commoner who spoke for country folk. "But destroy our farms, and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country." Now, that's cultural warfare. Americans thinking of themselves as "modern" and "advanced" have always battled other Americans whom they wrote off as backward and parochial. The people

dismissed as backward have always looked down on high-falutin big-city folks as hopelessly immoral. Today these battling types are all intermixed in suburbs and exurbs, though they try hard to congregate with their own kind.

And yes, we are black and white, and much that passes for cultural warfare is also racial warfare. We are a country that waged a civil war over slavery and states' rights. Whether you explain that war in terms of the former or of the latter is still a sign, more than 140 years after it ended, of where your sympathies lie.

This history is important, because we talk about the culture war as if it were a novel creation of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. There is a hidden assumption that we were once a happy, homogenous nation that came apart only when hippies preached free love, the religious right rose, secularists became more assertive, the Supreme Court began issuing liberal decisions, talk-show hosts began yelling, and intelligent designers began lobbying school boards. Our perception of today's cultural battlefield is shaped by a view of the 1950s as conflict-free. So we forget that the seeds of modern feminism were planted in Ozzie and Harriet's day, with the rise of a large generation of well-educated women. We forget that the hippies of the 1960s were preceded by the Beats of the 1950s. *On the Road* was published in 1957, not 1967. Norman Podhoretz, who was to become a central figure in the rise of neo-conservatism, gave hints of the battles to come when, as a liberal, he wrote a devastating attack in 1958 on the Beat sensibility of Jack Kerouac. Before the battles in the 1960s and 1970s to legalize abortion there were fights in the late 1940s to legalize birth control. We think of today's conflicts over the display of monuments in honor of the Ten Commandments as the product of a uniquely fractious time. But Americans have always argued over the public role of the Ten Commandments. Many citizens were left dead in Philadelphia after riots in 1844 over which version of the Bible (including which version of the commandments) should be used in the public schools.

So we should not be surprised today by battles over abortion and gay marriage, divisions between the more and the less religious, and fierce struggles over who should sit on the Supreme Court, how to settle the fate of those

near the end of their lives, whether or not the government should finance stem-cell research. The culture war is nothing new. It is also not exactly what we think it is.

The great virtue of the culture-war argument is also its great flaw: we can all use the debate to present our ideal visions or fierce criticisms of the United States, our pet views on human nature, our dreams about how politics (or the entertainment industry, the schools, family life) should be organized. The empirical argument over whether there is a culture war is often lost in polemics about which side one should take—assuming, of course, that there is a war.

My view (and it can be subjected to all these criticisms) is unapologetically Clintonian: Yes, there is a culture war, and no, there isn't. It depends on what the meaning of "culture war" is.

If one looks primarily at the extremes of opinion (and I use "extremes" descriptively, not pejoratively), of course there is a deep cultural conflict in the United States. It is waged between the 15 to 20 percent of the country that is both profoundly religious and staunchly conservative and the 15 to 20 percent that is both profoundly secular and staunchly liberal. One can quibble about the exact numbers at each end; religious conservatives probably outnumber secular liberals, though the secular group is growing. But there is no doubt that these two groups exist, have very strong feelings, and on the whole can't stand each other. They regularly toss epithets across their divide. The godly attack the ungodly. The tolerant attack the intolerant. The cosmopolitan attack the parochial. The rooted attack the rootless. Moralists attack the permissive.

But whatever the numbers, those most ardently engaged on both sides of this fight, taken together, do not constitute a majority of Americans. I would reckon (and much social-science evidence supports this) that 60 to 70 percent of us fall at some middle point. Those in the middle may tilt a bit left or a bit right, but they often have mixed or ambivalent views. Many defy stereotypes: right-to-lifers for gay marriage; pro-choicers against assisted suicide; devoutly religious liberals; decidedly agnostic conservatives. And many simply run away at the first sign that a cultural battle is about to break out.



Network exit polls in the 2004 election suggested how broad the non-warring middle is. Asked about abortion, 21 percent of voters said that it should always be legal, 34 percent that it should mostly be legal, 26 percent that it should mostly be illegal, and 16 percent that it should always be illegal. Viewed one way, respondents were "pro-choice" by a margin of 55 to 42 percent. Viewed another way, 60 percent of them gravitated to a "middle" position on abortion. There most certainly is a conflict akin to a culture war among the 37 percent of Americans—21 percent consistently pro-choice, 16 percent consistently pro-life—who were absolutely certain about where they stood on abortion. The rest of the population watches the battle from the sidelines, sometimes with sympathy for one camp or the other, but without anything like the engagement or commitment of the true warriors.

Meanwhile, the exit polls found that 25 percent of voters thought gays and lesbians should be able to marry legally, 35 percent favored civil unions, and 37 percent opposed any legal recognition for gay relationships. These findings could be used mischievously by either side in the argument. It can truthfully be said that 72 percent of voters opposed gay marriage. With equal truthfulness it can be said that 60 percent favored either gay marriage or civil unions.

A case can be made that journalists, and political activists trying to mobilize constituencies, are largely responsible for the idea that we are polarized. The political scientist Morris Fiorina is not being excessively cynical when he says that the notion of a culture war gives life to "useful fundraising strategies" on the part of culture warriors.

"Certainly, one can find a few warriors who engage in noisy skirmishes," Fiorina wrote in *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Society* (2004).

Many of the activists in the political parties and the various cause groups do, in fact, hate each other and regard themselves as combatants in a war. But their hatreds and battles are not shared by the great mass of the American people—certainly nowhere near to '80-90 percent of the country—who are for the most part moderate in their views and tolerant in their manner.

Rather provocatively, Fiorina added, "The bulk of the American citizenry is somewhat in the position of the unfortunate citizens of some third-world countries who try to

stay out of the crossfire while Maoist guerrillas and right-wing death squads shoot at each other."

Here again the yes-and-no answer to the culture-war question provides a useful correction. Fiorina is quite right that many Americans want to stay out of culture wars, and that we are on the whole both moderate and tolerant. Yet as the numbers on abortion and gay marriage suggest, the proportion of us who care a great deal about these matters is rather larger than his metaphor of guerrillas versus death squads would imply. And arguments about these questions are passionately carried on well beyond the elite level of American life.

Americans who attend religious services more than once a week voted overwhelmingly for George W. Bush in 2004. Those who never attend voted heavily for John Kerry. As William Galston and Elaine Kamarck showed in their important recent essay "The Politics of Polarization," written for the organization Third Way, this particular religious divide is something new. The old divisions have not gone away: one of the largest voting gaps is between blacks and whites, and there is also a divide between Jews, who are strongly Democratic, and white gentiles, who tilt Republican. But an additional divide pits traditionalist or orthodox believers of almost all stripes (including Orthodox Jews but not African-American Christians) against doubters, unbelievers, and more-liberal or "modernist" believers.

James Davison Hunter, a sociologist at the University of Virginia who introduced the culture-war concept to a wide

audience, defines the orthodox or traditionalist view as "the commitment on the part of adherents to an external, definable, and transcendent authority." In progressivism, on the other hand, "moral authority tends to be defined by the spirit of the modern age, a spirit of rationalism and subjectivism."

These conflicting world views play out across many issues related to religion and science, family life and sexuality. Pundits did not invent the battle over Terri Schiavo's fate or the arguments over whether intelligent design should be taught as part of science curricula in the public schools. Karl Rove was not a fool for deciding to mobilize Christian churches on Bush's behalf in 2004.

But neither was Rove a fool for encouraging Bush to speak cautiously on these matters, lest he turn off too many of that mass of moderate and tolerant voters to whom Fiorina rightly calls our attention. During his debates with John Kerry in 2004 Bush emphasized his respect for "the culture of life," but he would never say flatly that he favored overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Because those pro-lifers who were genuinely engaged in the warfare over abortion allowed Bush to speak in code, he did not have to drag more-moderate voters into a war they wanted no part of. Kerry tried to choreograph a similarly intricate cultural dance on gay marriage. He sent strong signals of sympathy to the gay community, and criticized Bush for dragging the "divisive" issue into national politics. But Kerry also said explicitly that he was opposed to gay marriage.

This strange approach to politics, involving nudges, nods, and winks on cultural issues, reflects the real division in the nation: between those who want to have a culture war and

MILESTONES IN THE CULTURE WARS

1965	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
■ Griswold v. Connecticut invalidates a Connecticut law prohibiting use of contraception by married couples and establishes a constitutionally protected "right to privacy" VITAL STATISTICS Married couples: 72.6% of all households Divorces: 2.5 per 1,000 people Teen births: 70.5 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 Out-of-wedlock births: 7.7% of all unmarried women	■ Colorado passes the first law allowing abortion in cases involving rape, incest, severe defects, or threats to the health of the mother ■ Loving v. Virginia overturns state bans on interracial marriage	■ Pope Paul VI issues <i>Humanae Vitae</i>, condemning use of artificial birth control ■ Epperson v. Arkansas declares any law forbidding the teaching of evolution to be unconstitutional ■ Hair premieres; first Broadway musical to depict nudity	■ Stonewall riots in New York City kick off the modern American gay-rights movement ■ Woodstock ■ Portnoy's Complaint, by Philip Roth, published ■ Midnight Cowboy, rated X, wins Best Picture	■ New York passes law allowing abortion up to the 24th week of pregnancy ■ First U.S. no-fault divorce law takes effect, in California VITAL STATISTICS Married couples: 70.5% of all households Divorces: 3.5 per 1,000 people Teen births: 68.3 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 Out-of-wedlock births: 10.7% of all unmarried women	■ Premiere of <i>All in the Family</i> ■ United States v. Vuitch upholds a D.C. law allowing abortion when necessary for the mother's physical and psychological health; first Supreme Court decision on abortion	■ First issue of <i>Ms.</i> magazine, co-founded by Gloria Steinem, appears on newsstands ■ Equal Rights Amendment approved by 2/3 vote in the House and the Senate; goes to states for ratification ■ The Joy of Sex, by Alex Comfort, published ■ Deep Throat premieres	■ Roe v. Wade invalidates all state bans on abortion before the third trimester ■ Miller v. California holds that materials can be banned for obscenity only if they "depict or describe patently offensive 'hard core' sexual conduct specifically defined" ■ George Carlin's "Seven Dirty Words" monologue airs

those who don't. At election time political candidates need simultaneously to "rally the base," which includes a heavy quotient of culture warriors, and to "appeal to the center," meaning the majority (often left of center on economic issues), which sees health care, education, jobs, taxes, and national security as central concerns trumping gay marriage or abortion. The result is a strained, dysfunctional, and often dishonest political dialogue based on symbolic utterances. Hot-button questions that rally particular sectors of the electorate—and draw listeners and viewers to confrontational radio and television programs—pre-empt serious discussion of what ails American culture and society.

Why Can't They Be Like Us?, the title of Father Andrew Greeley's 1971 book, is also a very old American question. Yet we often answer the question by ignoring it. Sometimes we even acknowledge that "they" are more like "us" than we want to admit. Occasionally we'll notice that the culture war rages inside individuals at least as much as between groups. Spotting this fact is one of the sociologist Alan Wolfe's great contributions to the culture-war debate, enabling him to conclude, as the title of his 1998 book has it, that we are "one nation, after all."

Prohibitionists sometimes pray for gin. Cultural liberals are as appalled as anyone else that their children might watch X-rated movies or cruise dangerous Web sites. Cultural conservatives who have gay friends cannot abide prejudice against homosexuals. Opponents of abortion often cannot find it in themselves to condemn a woman they know who has had an abortion for a reason they understand. Some supporters of abortion rights find the issue

morally troubling nonetheless, and might never choose to have an abortion themselves.

Many, in short, long for freedom but understand freedom's limits. Many long for orthodoxy yet want it to be flexible on something that matters to their own sense of freedom. Thus does a rabbi from Montana teach David Brooks the wonderfully useful term "flexidox." The bourgeois bohemians Brooks has introduced us to in his writing are resolutely flexidox.

The past decade or so may have seen the U.S. economy send many well-paying blue-collar jobs abroad, but it has been very good for those in the business of producing cultural jeremiads. A partial list includes *The Closing of the American Mind*, *The De-moralization of Society*, *The Corrosion of Character*, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, *Bowling Alone*, *The Death of Outrage*, *The Great Disruption*, and *Egotopia: Narcissism and the New American Landscape*.

All these books speak, albeit in very different ways, to a sense of cultural and moral unease. It is an unease not bounded by ideological categories. On the contrary, people on the left and on the right are equally forceful in decrying self-centered individualism, consumerism, new pressures on the family, and the decline of community. Analysts left, right, and center are sensitive to how technological and economic changes have altered the rhythms of family life and lifted up certain virtues and values at the expense of others. In *The Great Disruption*, Francis Fukuyama, a freethinking neo-conservative, argues that the new knowledge-based economy will transform the social world of the twenty-first century—

1974

■ Larry Flynt founds *Hustler*



1975

■ U.S. television networks establish a nightly "family hour" free of sex and violence

VITAL STATISTICS

Married couples: 66% of all households

Divorces: 4.8 per 1,000 people

Abortions: 21.7 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44

Teen births: 55.6 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19

Out-of-wedlock births: 14.3% of all unmarried women

1976

■ Episcopal Church permits female priests

■ New Jersey Supreme Court rules that the parents of Karen Ann Quinlan, a woman in a persistent vegetative state, may remove her respirator

1978

■ First test-tube baby, Louise Joy Brown, born in England

■ Harvey Milk, a city supervisor and the first openly gay elected official in America, assassinated in San Francisco



1979



■ Moral Majority founded, under the leadership of Jerry Falwell

1980

■ Ronald Reagan elected on a Republican platform that for the first time calls for *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned

VITAL STATISTICS

Married couples: 60.8% of all households

Divorces: 5.2 per 1,000 people

Abortions: 29.3 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44

Teen births: 53 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19

Out-of-wedlock births: 18.4% of all unmarried women

1981

■ First test-tube baby born in the United States



■ Debut of MTV

1984

■ Nude photos surface of the current Miss America, Vanessa Williams, who abdicates her throne



1985

■ Debut of *Silent Screams*, a controversial video of an abortion, produced by Dr. Bernard Nathanson, an abortion provider turned pro-lifer

■ Tipper Gore and other congressional wives found Parents Music Resource Center, to combat "alarming trends" in popular music

VITAL STATISTICS

Married couples: 58% of all households

Divorces: 5 per 1,000 people

Abortions: 28 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44

Teen births: 51 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19

Out-of-wedlock births: 22% of all unmarried women

how we raise our children, where we live, what we value—as much as the Industrial Revolution altered the organization of life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fukuyama sees the knowledge economy as placing a high premium on radical individualism and a lower value on solidarity.

From the left Richard Sennett argues that the new, highly flexible capitalism has ended the concept of loyalty at work and therefore undermined it in society. "Character is expressed by loyalty and mutual commitment, or through the pursuit of long-term goals, or by the practice of delayed gratification for the sake of a future end," he writes in *The Corrosion of Character*. But in the new economy, he insists, there is no long term. He asks, "How do we decide what is of lasting value in ourselves in a society which is impatient, which focuses on the immediate moment? How can long-term goals be pursued in an economy devoted to the short term? How can mutual loyalties and commitments be sustained in institutions which are constantly breaking apart or continually being redesigned?" How, indeed?

Not all intellectuals attribute cultural and moral unease to social and economic changes. The writings of Gertrude Himmelfarb and William Bennett place a strong emphasis on *individual* virtue and its alleged decline. But Himmelfarb, a sophisticated conservative historian, is alive to how "manners and morals" are embedded in a society (she is partial to the way the Victorians managed to do this), not created out of thin air by individuals. She shrewdly notes the shift away from talk of "virtues" to an analysis of "values." The word "virtue," she writes, "carried with it a sense of gravity and authority, as 'values' does not." Values, Himmelfarb says, "can

be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits, conventions, preferences, prejudices, even idiosyncrasies—whatever any individual, group, or society happens to value, at any time, for any reason." She adds, "One cannot say of virtues, as one can of values, that anyone's virtues are as good as anyone else's, or that everyone has a right to his own virtues."

Sennett and Himmelfarb disagree profoundly about politics, yet they share an unease about the decline of old virtues in a highly individualistic society. Himmelfarb worries about what happens to morality in a world in which values can be picked and chosen as one might buy a peach or a cantaloupe at the supermarket. Sennett wonders how individuals can live meaningful moral lives in an economy that wages constant war against loyalty, commitment, and solidarity.

Beneath the clamor of the politicized and televised culture war, in other words, is a more measured debate between libertarians and communitarians, between individualists (moral or economic or both) and those who would emphasize some version of a common good. This, too, is an old American argument. As Robert Bellah and his colleagues wrote in *Habits of the Heart*, the history of our country might be seen as one long debate over how to balance the joys of individual freedom against the necessity for community and commitment. But this is a hard argument. It's much easier to scream across barricades about abortion, gay marriage, or Terri Schiavo's fate.

It has long been fashionable in American political discussion to separate "social issues" from "economic issues." But the two, as Sennett and Fukuyama would insist, are intertwined. Most Americans, no matter which cultural battle

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
■ Bowers v. Hardwick holds that sodomy is not protected under the right to privacy	■ Publication of <i>The Closing of the American Mind</i>, by Allan Bloom ■ Edwards v. Aguillard holds that teaching creationism in public schools breaches separation of church and state ■ Senate rejects Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court	■ Pat Robertson shocks the GOP by placing second in the Iowa caucuses  ■ On the heels of his defeated presidential bid, Robertson founds the Christian Coalition ■ The Simpsons premieres 	■ Cruzan v. Director upholds right to reject medical treatment, sparking interest in living wills VITAL STATISTICS Married couples: 59% of all households Divorces: 4.7 per 1,000 people Abortions: 24.7 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 Teen births: 59.9 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 Out-of-wedlock births: 28% of all unmarried women		■ "Summer of Mercy" in Wichita, Kansas: pro-life activists launch effort to shut down abortion clinics 	■ Dan Quayle attacks Murphy Brown for glamorizing unwed motherhood ■ Planned Parenthood v. Casey reaffirms the right to abortion but accepts certain limitations ■ At the Republican National Convention, Pat Buchanan declares that the Cold War has given way to a "cultural war" 	■ Abortion doctor David Gunn shot to death by Michael Griffin in Pensacola, Florida ■ After a failed attempt to allow homosexuals to serve in the military, Bill Clinton announces a compromise: "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ■ Hawaii Supreme Court rules that prohibiting same-sex marriage may violate the state constitution ■ Broadway premiere of Tony Kushner's <i>Angels in America</i>	■ John Salvi shoots and kills workers at two abortion clinics in Brookline, Massachusetts  ■ Paula Jones files suit against Bill Clinton for sexual harassment

they choose to fight (or avoid), understand this. Family life is powerfully affected by work arrangements—and by the ability to find decently paying jobs. Community life is shaped by how we build our homes and neighborhoods, by how long people's commutes are, and by how much time is left over from the struggle to make a living. Our culture is shaped in large part by commercial forces that, paradoxically, promote a permissiveness in entertainment and advertising that conservatives who in theory revere the market in fact deplore.

The counterculture has become the over-the-counter culture. Liberals and conservatives alike are vexed by this. Liberals desperately do not want to be bluenosed or judgmental, yet they are uneasy with a consumerist, individualistic culture that often violates their sense of community, decency, and mutual obligation. Conservatives who dread economic regulation and defend capitalism at every turn often find the cultural fruits of capitalism bitter and distasteful. Liberals and conservatives may battle over gay marriage or abortion and yet agree wholeheartedly on what television programs their children shouldn't watch, what Web sites they shouldn't visit, and what video games they shouldn't play. Both are likely to be critical of mall culture, and for some of the same reasons.

Yet everyone tries to cope, and our coping has been remarkably successful. The exurbs, so disliked by opponents of sprawl, produce their own kinds of community through religious congregations, kids' sports leagues, mothers' groups, school organizations, business clubs—and political activities on both sides of the cultural divides.

Fears of moral decay may be pervasive, but crime, teen

pregnancy, abortion, and divorce have declined since the early 1990s. Feminism, which conservatives once feared as an assault on family life, has proved its compatibility with updated versions of old-fashioned family arrangements. Every father of a daughter, no matter his politics, is a feminist when it comes to her education and her ambitions. Most conservative parents of gay or lesbian children, however uneasy they may be with homosexuality, will stand up for their kids against bigotry. Most liberal parents, however open in theory they may be to cultural experimentation and rebellion against accepted norms, lay down the law to their children on homework, dating practices, and the dangers of drunk driving and drugs.

We would be better off if we challenged the culture-war metaphor and, in the process, the self-understandings of liberals and conservatives. One need not be a cultural pessimist to share the concerns of Sennett, Himmelfarb, and Bellah over the state of our common life. One need not be a wild-eyed optimist to see signs that—for all the disruptions wrought by the new economy, for all the moral disturbances created by wardrobe and other cultural malfunctions—Americans, as individuals and in their families, are trying to create new forms of community and new ways of transmitting old values (and, yes, virtues).

The culture war exploits our discontents. The task of politics is to heal them. ▀

E. J. Dionne Jr. is a syndicated columnist, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a professor at Georgetown University. He is also co-editor of a Pew Forum/Brookings book series, the next volume of which is a dialogue between James Davison Hunter and Alan Wolfe.

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004	2005
■ Romer v. Evans bars states from excluding gays from anti-discrimination laws ■ Dolly, the first cloned sheep, is born ■ Bill Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as a "legal union between one man and one woman"	■ Ellen DeGeneres "comes out" on her sitcom, <i>Ellen</i> ■ Washington, et al. v. Harold Glucksberg, et al. finds no right to assisted suicide in the Constitution ■ "Death With Dignity" law, allowing physician-assisted suicide, goes into effect in Oregon ■ Premiere of South Park	■ Publication of Darwin's Black Box, by Michael Behe, an argument for "intelligent design" ■ Monica Lewinsky scandal erupts ■ Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, murdered in Laramie, Wyoming	 ■ Vermont passes a law permitting civil unions between homosexual couples ■ Kansas Board of Education votes to delete any reference to evolution from the state's science curriculum	■ Stenberg v. Carhart invalidates state bans on partial-birth abortion VITAL STATISTICS Married couples: 52.8% of all households Divorces: 4.1 per 1,000 people Abortions: 21.3 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 Teen births: 47.7 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 Out-of-wedlock births: 33.2% of all unmarried women	■ George W. Bush restricts federal funding for stem-cell research 	■ Episcopal Church consecrates its first openly gay bishop, in New Hampshire ■ George W. Bush signs national partial-birth-abortion ban into law ■ Lawrence v. Texas rules that bans on homosexual sodomy are unconstitutional ■ Massachusetts Supreme Court decides that gays have a right to marry under the state constitution ■ Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore relieved of office for refusing to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the state-supreme-court building	■ The Passion of the Christ released ■ George W. Bush calls for constitutional ban on gay marriage; gay-marriage bans pass by referendum in eleven states ■ Janet Jackson suffers "wardrobe malfunction" at the Super Bowl	 ■ Supreme Court allows a Ten Commandments exhibit in a Texas courthouse, but bans two such displays in Kentucky ■ Terri Schiavo's feeding tube is removed

Tribal Relations

How Americans really sort out on cultural and religious issues—and what it means for our politics

BY STEVEN WALDMAN AND JOHN C. GREEN

Many Americans, when they think about values and politics, focus on the “religious right”—conservatives led by James Dobson, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson, and interested mostly in cultural issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage. So on election night in 2004, when exit polls found that the No. 1 priority cited by voters was “moral values,” many jumped to the conclusion that these voters and their agenda had propelled George W. Bush back into the White House.

Soon it became clear that the “values vote” had been exaggerated. Only one fifth of the respondents listed moral values as the primary basis for their vote. Nearly four out of five listed one of several foreign-policy, economic, or other domestic concerns. And the same polls showed Americans to have social views that would make conservative Christians weep: 60 percent said gays should be allowed either to legally marry or to form civil unions, and 55 percent believed that abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

Religion and values undoubtedly play a large role in our politics. But their impact is often misunderstood. In the most simplistic renderings values come in only two varieties: those held by the religious right and those held by everybody else. During the 2004 campaign we began to map out a very different topology of religion, values, and politics in America, based on survey data gathered by the Ray C. Bliss Institute at the University of Akron in collaboration with the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. We combined measures of religious affiliation, behavior, and belief to see how values cluster within the voting public. The resulting picture—which we initially described on the faith-and-spirituality Web site Beliefnet.com and have continued to refine—reveals not two monolithic and mutually antagonistic camps but, rather, twelve coherent blocs with overlapping interests and values. We call these groups the twelve tribes of American politics.

The chart on page 138 shows the twelve tribes and their politics in 2004—Republican tribes in red, Democratic in blue, and swing in purple. The tribes have been placed on a two-way grid that reflects their positions on cultural and economic issues. The cultural issues include abortion, stem-cell research, and gay rights. The economic issues include social-welfare programs and the scope of the federal government. Foreign-policy issues are left off

the grid for simplicity’s sake, but we will mention them where relevant.

A brief review of the political habits and migratory patterns of the twelve tribes shows both the complex relationship between values and voting in the United States and the striking degree of compatibility in the values of most Americans. It reveals the role actually played by moral values in the 2004 election, and helps illuminate how the clash of values is likely to influence politics and law in the future.

THE REPUBLICAN TRIBES

The fervor and coherence of the Republican base, especially the base of social conservatives, attracted a lot of attention in 2004—and compared with the Democratic base, it is cohesive on moral issues. But it’s not monolithic. The Republican base sorts into three related tribes that agree on many issues but place different emphasis on each.

The **religious right**, consisting of traditional evangelical Protestants, accounted for 12.6 percent of the electorate and the core of the moral-values voters in 2004. Almost 90 percent of these voted for Bush. This cohort is as Republican as Republican gets: no group is more conservative on moral values, economic issues, or foreign policy. Contrary to popular belief, the religious right is not growing quickly; its size barely changed from 2000 to 2004.

Heartland culture warriors stand arm-in-arm with the religious right on most moral issues and are nearly as numerous (11.4 percent of the electorate). They are traditional Christians outside the evangelical community, the most prominent being Bush (a traditional United Methodist). Culture warriors are neither as religiously orthodox nor as politically conservative as the religious right, but they were nonetheless energized by same-sex marriage and other high-profile moral issues in 2004. Seventy-two percent voted for Bush in that election.

Heartland culture warriors did not exist as a distinct political group twenty years ago. They are the product of a convulsive theological restructuring—one that has pushed moral values further into the political limelight. Whereas denomination used to predict political affiliation (Catholics were Democrats; Episcopalians were Republicans), religious beliefs and practices are now more important

Congregations and denominations have split over issues such as the inerrancy of the Bible, the role of women, and sexual morality. In recent decades theological conservatives from different denominations—Catholic, Protestant, Mormon—have found one another. In some cases they've formed caucuses within their churches. In others they've switched to more-congenial congregations. One consequence is that they've coalesced on Election Day, voting for candidates who fit their beliefs rather than their churches' historic loyalties.

Moderate evangelicals (10.8 percent of the electorate) make up the final solidly Republican tribe. The less traditional members of evangelical churches, they are culturally conservative but moderate on economic issues, favoring a larger government and aid to the poor. Bush received 64 percent of this tribe's vote, up from 60 percent in 2000.

Moderate evangelicals are much less absolutist than their religious-right cousins: for example, they favor restricting rather than banning abortion, and support some gay rights but not same-sex marriage. As much as anything, they like Bush's personal faith. If you want a Rosetta stone for Bush's evangelical appeal, watch *George Bush: Faith in the White House*, a 2004 documentary that was shown at many church-based Republican campaign events and barely mentions gays or abortion. Rather, it emphasizes that Bush once was lost—a drunk and a ne'er-do-well—but found his faith and was saved; that he was persecuted (by the media) for his faith; that his faith gave him strength and moral clarity; and, most controversial, that he was called by God to the office. These themes resonated deeply among evangelicals.

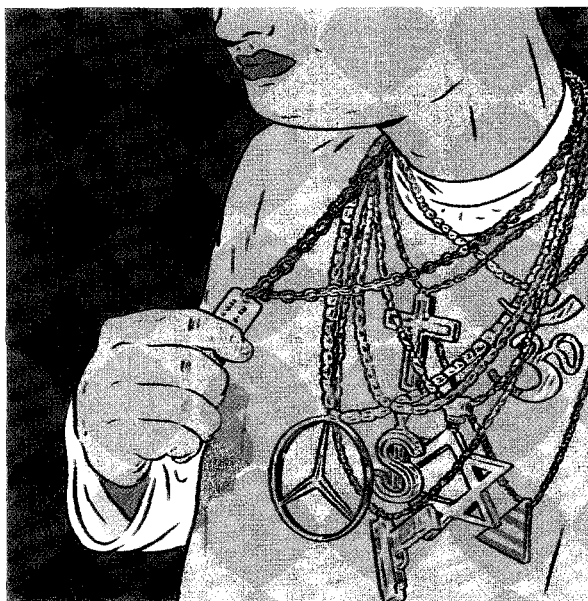
The three red tribes make up about 35 percent of the electorate, and although their members don't vote exclusively on the basis of cultural issues, values are certainly a key ingredient in the glue that holds the three together. Most of these voters desire a measure of religious expression in public life and a person of faith in the White House. But their positions on such hot-button issues as abortion, gay rights, and stem-cell research are not uniform. Should a future presidential election offer two obviously pious candidates, the Republican "values" base may show itself to be less cohesive than it now appears—and moderate evangelicals in particular could conceivably begin to defect.

THE DEMOCRATIC TRIBES

While much hay was made of the "religion gap" in 2004—the tendency of weekly worship attendees to vote Republican—Democrats have religious constituencies too. Indeed, though Democrats may attend church less frequently, many have rich devotional lives, and a surprising number hold conservative cultural views.

A deep-blue **religious left** is almost exactly the same size as the religious right but receives much less attention. John Kerry is perhaps one representative of this group, which draws members from many Christian denominations and is a product of the same theological restructuring that created the heartland culture warriors. Members of the religious left espouse a progressive theology (agreeing, for instance, that "all the world's great religions are

equally true") and are very liberal on cultural issues such as abortion and gay marriage. About a quarter attend church weekly. The religious left is somewhat liberal on economic policy and decidedly to the left on foreign policy. Its stances on both moral values and the Iraq War—but especially the latter—have pushed it further into the Democratic camp. Seventy percent backed Kerry in 2004; 51 percent had backed Gore in 2000. The religious left was the largest—and the fastest-growing—single tribe in the Kerry coalition.

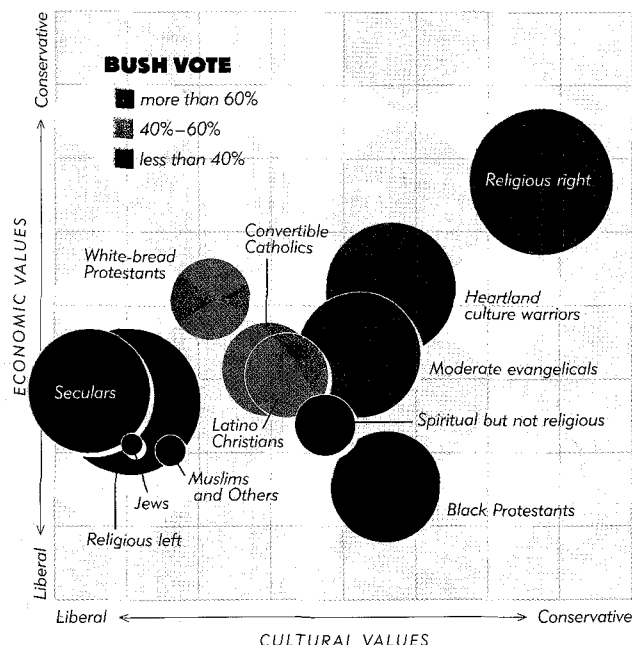


Spiritual but not religious voters, who made up 5.3 percent of the electorate in 2004, are also increasing in number. These are people with no religious affiliation who nonetheless believe in God or the soul. It might be tempting to imagine the members of this tribe as aging flower children or their cultural heirs—and indeed, these voters are liberal on both economic issues and foreign policy. But they actually lean slightly to the right on abortion and gay rights. In 2004 their votes were based on economics and the war, so Kerry won more than three fifths of them.

Black Protestants (9.6 percent of the electorate) are the most traditionally religious of the Democratic tribes, and the most culturally conservative as well—in fact, on moral-values issues they are remarkably similar to the hard-right heartland culture warriors. Whereas many Democrats worried about the intermingling of Bush's faith and his politics, 50 percent of African-Americans said his faith had too

The Twelve Tribes of American Politics

This chart breaks the 2004 electorate into twelve politically relevant "tribes" based on their values, behaviors, and religious affiliation. Each circle corresponds in relative size to the group it represents. The chart reveals some polarization of the electorate. But it also shows that voting preferences do not sort as neatly by cultural values or religious affiliation as people might expect. Tribe definitions are below.



Religious right: White evangelical Protestants with traditional beliefs and practices

Heartland culture warriors: White non-evangelical Christians with traditional beliefs and practices

Moderate evangelicals: White evangelical Protestants with moderate beliefs and practices

White-bread Protestants: White mainline Protestants with moderate beliefs and practices

Convertible Catholics: Non-Latino Catholics with moderate beliefs and practices

Religious left: White Christians with liberal beliefs and practices

Muslims and Others: Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and other religious groups not otherwise categorized

Seculars: Voters with no religious affiliation, beliefs, or practices

Jews, Latino Christians, black Protestants, and the spiritual but not religious are self-explanatory

Sources: Ray C. Bliss Institute and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

little impact on his policymaking. Bush made modest gains among black Protestants in Ohio and other battleground states, and those gains contributed to his re-election. But this tribe was also the most liberal on economic and foreign-policy issues, and more than four fifths voted for Kerry.

Jews and Muslims and Others make up a small part of the electorate—1.9 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively—but the latter group is growing. Members of non-Christian faiths tend to be liberal on cultural issues, and moral values may have helped Kerry a bit with these constituencies, but like many of the blue tribes, they favor the Democratic Party mostly because of its economic and foreign-policy stances.

Non-religious Americans, or **seculars** (10.7 percent of the electorate), are largely responsible for the common view that Democrats are less religious than Republicans—and deeply divided from them on most cultural issues. Seculars are the most culturally liberal of the twelve tribes, and also liberal on economics and foreign policy. Many seculars are especially irritated by Bush's religious expression, and most dislike any commingling of religion and public life. Seculars pose a political dilemma for the Democratic Party: Attempts to energize them based on moral issues would antagonize not only the red tribes and many swing voters but also many blue tribes. Yet attempts to play to more-mainstream American views may turn them off, depressing their turnout.

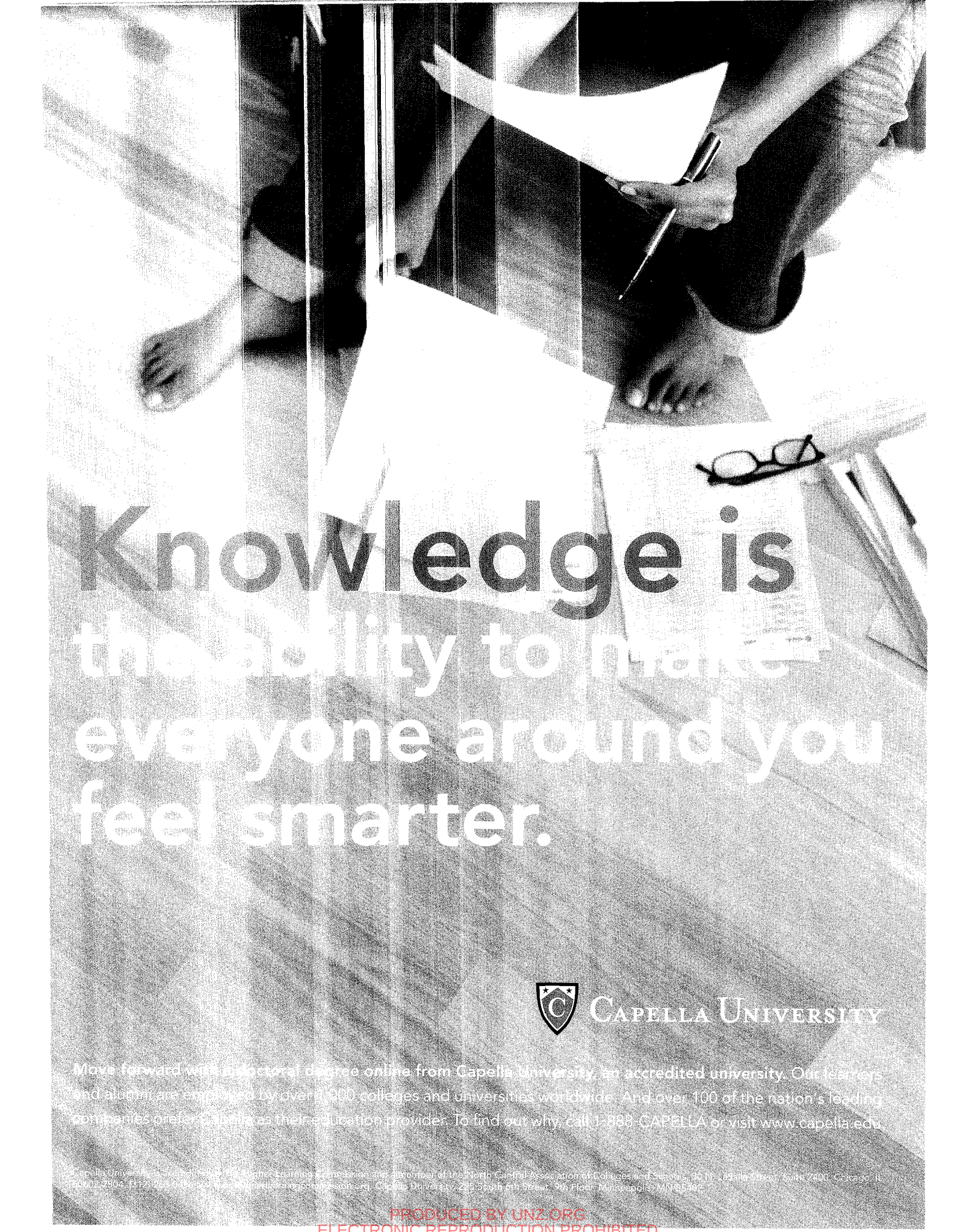
Indeed, while the blue tribes are fairly well united on economic and foreign-policy issues, they're all over the map on cultural issues. Because the Democratic coalition includes highly religious tribes, non-religious tribes, and everything in between, talking about values can be perilous. Go strongly pro-gay, and one will alienate black Protestants and the spiritual but not religious. Go anti-abortion, and one will lose seculars and the religious left. So Democrats tend to elevate one particular moral value—tolerance—above all others. The merits of tolerance aside, it is part of what keeps the coalition together. But it leaves the Democrats open to attack for lacking a strong moral identity.

THE SWING TRIBES

Three tribes were up for grabs in 2004 and are still on the move politically. Bush won two of them, and could not have been re-elected without them.

White-bread Protestants (8.1 percent of the electorate) are the most Republican of the purple tribes. They come from the once dominant mainstream Protestant churches that were the backbone of the Republican coalition from William McKinley to Gerald Ford. By now their more traditional co-religionists have joined the heartland culture warriors, and their most liberal brethren the religious left.

In 2004 Bush won just under three fifths of this tribe. He held those voters because of his views on tax cuts (they



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tend to be affluent and laissez-faire) and terrorism. But white-bread Protestants are closer to the Democrats on moral issues: for instance, a majority are pro-choice. From a historical perspective Kerry did well among this group—perhaps a harbinger of further Democratic gains.

Convertible Catholics (seven percent of the electorate) are the moderate remnant of the non-Latino Catholic vote. Bush won 55 percent of them in 2004. If Kerry, who is Catholic, had done as well with them as the Southern Baptist Al Gore did in 2000, he probably would have won Ohio and the national election.

Convertible Catholics are true moderates. Both the Democrat Maria Shriver and her Republican husband Arnold Schwarzenegger are good examples. Few believe in papal infallibility, but they are less likely than liberals to say that “all the world’s great religions are equally true.” They are conflicted on abortion and the scope of government, but strongly favor increased spending to help the poor. Many favor a multilateral foreign policy—except when it comes to the war on terrorism, about which they agree with the president. Scholars describe them as “cross-pressured”—in other words, squishy. They feel that neither party represents them well.

Should a future presidential election offer two obviously pious candidates, the Republican “values” base may show itself to be less cohesive than it now appears.

Bush pursued convertible Catholics aggressively in 2004 with shrewd appeals to social stability (backing traditional marriage), concern for the poor (faith-based initiatives), and toughness on terrorism. Al-Qaeda was more important than abortion to his success with this tribe.

Latino Christians are the final swing tribe. They went 55 percent for Kerry in 2004, but Bush made large inroads: he’d won only 28 percent of them in 2000. Values played a large part in this swing—but not primarily because of any Latino Catholic affinity for Republican stances on hot-button cultural issues. Latino Catholics, although they tend to be pro-life, voted for Kerry by more than two to one, largely because of their liberal economic views. Bush did best among Latino Protestants, many of whom come from a Pentecostal tradition that stresses conservative values and an emotional, spirit-filled worship experience. Bush’s personal history was appealing to them, as were his efforts to reach out to evangelical churches and religious voters.

As one might expect, the purple tribes lean in different directions on different issues. But where they lean least—or, more precisely, where they vote their leanings least—is on

moral issues. They are generally religious, but care little for the culture wars. Their values are largely in line with the legal status quo, and they usually vote based on economic and foreign-policy concerns—at least so long as they don’t see either party as seeking a revolution (one way or the other) in personal freedom or the separation of church and state.

Given the beliefs and attitudes of the twelve tribes, what can we say about the future of moral values in politics?

Perhaps the most important lesson is that the size and beliefs of the moderate tribes—the “moral middle,” comprising the swing tribes and even a few of the tribes within each party’s base—strictly limit how much public policy can actually change after an election. Nothing illustrates that better than the behavior of the Bush administration in the White House. Republican control of all three branches of the federal government is the realization of a religious-right dream. Yet Bush, whatever he said on the campaign trail, has done little to advance the religious right’s agenda.

In the 2004 election the official Republican policy, as stated in the party’s platform, was to support a constitutional amendment banning abortion. The Republicans also championed Bush’s support for an amendment banning gay marriage. Since the election, however, Bush has been silent on both issues. He has not proposed any major restrictions on abortion—nor have the Republican leaders who control both houses of Congress—and has limited his public remarks to criticisms of “partial-birth” abortion and general comments about the “culture of life.” He has given not one major speech advocating an amendment to ban gay marriage; in fact, he has dramatically reduced his emphasis on this issue. Bush made a few well-publicized comments expressing openness to the teaching of intelligent design in public schools, but he subsequently pushed no legislation to encourage that goal.

In the past when we’ve asked religious conservatives privately why they tolerated Bush’s doing so little on the cultural issues that were so important during the election, they have responded, in effect, “We need to keep our eye on the ball.” The “ball” is the Supreme Court. Religious conservatives believe that permissive judges are the root of much evil in America, and consequently they have allowed Bush enormous latitude as long as they thought he would deliver on judicial nominees.

But he hasn’t really—at least not obviously. Conservatives reacted so harshly to the Harriet Miers nomination because neither Miers nor John Roberts was prepared to side with them openly on crucial sexual and moral issues.

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Had Roberts and Miers replaced Rehnquist and O'Connor, the Court would probably not have shifted much to the right; in fact, it might have shifted a bit to the left.

Even the Samuel Alito nomination is telling on this point. Religious conservatives were thrilled with the choice and yet went along with the White House strategy of obscuring rather than clarifying Alito's views on abortion. Alito may yet turn out to be a hero to religious conservatives, but surely it pained them to see him courting Democrats and moderate Republicans by asserting his respect for *Roe v. Wade*.

President Bush and his political tacticians are fully aware that they won the election in part by appealing to convertible Catholics, Latinos, moderate evangelicals, and white-bread Protestants. These tribes simply do not support most of the agenda of the religious right. Of course, this is not to say that our laws and cultural norms are forever frozen—far from it. For instance, polls suggest public support for some blurring of the church-state divide: many Americans think that God has been ejected too forcefully from the public square. And to judge from the slow drift of public opinion since the 1980s toward expanding gay rights, it's quite possible that government at all levels will eventually become more supportive of gay unions and even gay marriage. But such changes depend on support from the center—and for the most part our nation's current laws and policies on issues of moral values reflect majority opinion quite well.

None of this means, however, that our elections are likely to become any less fractious. In fact, we believe that the culture wars will increase in intensity during the next few election campaigns, even as the government continues to serve the broad cultural center.

There are two reasons for this view. First, although the poles are not demographically dominant, they have grown somewhat as heartland culture warriors and the religious left have each coalesced into a coherent voting bloc that can be cultivated politically. The secular and moderate-evangelical blocs are also growing. Second, both parties have strong tactical incentives to turn up the rhetorical volume in soliciting support from these tribes during campaigns.

This is especially true for the Republicans. Using moral values to rally the base has become a central tenet of Republican strategy. Because of the investments the party has made in building social-conservative networks and cultivating relationships with them, it would be extremely difficult to abandon this strategy in the short term.

Instead the Republicans may be compelled to intensify their strategy. The personal nature of George Bush's connection to evangelicals is unusual. Someone who lacks that "I once was lost but now am found" narrative may need

a harder-edged stand on cultural issues to connect with social conservatives. And the state of other issues behind the Bush coalition, such as foreign policy and the economy, may also necessitate further emphasis on values.

Perhaps this is why Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist took on the Terri Schiavo case, and why the would-be presidential nominee Mitt Romney—who starts with the double disadvantage of being a Mormon and a resident of Massachusetts—has taken the lead in opposing gay marriage. It may also explain why the Republican Senator Sam Brownback so publicly questioned the nomination of Harriet Miers.

But most of the specific issues emphasized by the Republicans are likely to be symbolic, and much of their language carefully coded so as not to alienate the swing tribes. Above all, the Republicans will try to paint themselves as the party of faith. One of the most striking outcomes of the 2004 election is that the Democrats were tagged as "anti-religion." A Pew Forum poll last summer showed that only 29 percent of the public—compared with 40 percent in the summer of 2004—saw the Democrats as "friendly" toward religion. It is hard to appeal even to blue tribes if one is perceived as hostile to faith in general. Surely the Republicans, having opened this wound, will want to make it bleed some more.

Yet if the conservative values agenda is advanced too far, Democrats and liberal interest groups may go on the attack, and Republicans will find themselves at a distinct electoral disadvantage. For instance, if religious conservatives prevail in their efforts to allow teaching of intelligent design in public schools, we can expect that liberals will push hard for reversals. And the center—including convertible Catholics, Latinos, and especially white-bread Protestants—may start to get twitchy if Republicans are perceived as "anti-progress." God is popular; but so is education, because most voters consider it crucial to the future economic prospects of their children.

In politics as in physics, every action produces a reaction, so continued pushing by conservatives will no doubt lead to pushing back by liberals. Cultural conflict will remain a staple of American politics for the foreseeable future. But concerns that the nation may become subject to the cultural views of either party's poles are alarmist—as is the view that at any one time half the nation is oppressed by the federal government's cultural agenda. The gap between the rhetoric and the reality of American cultural division is unlikely to shrink anytime soon. And it's that gap that is perhaps the most fundamental feature of our cultural politics today. ▀

Steven Waldman is the editor-in-chief and CEO of Beliefnet.com, the largest religion-and-spirituality site on the Web. John C. Green is a senior fellow with the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, at the University of Akron.

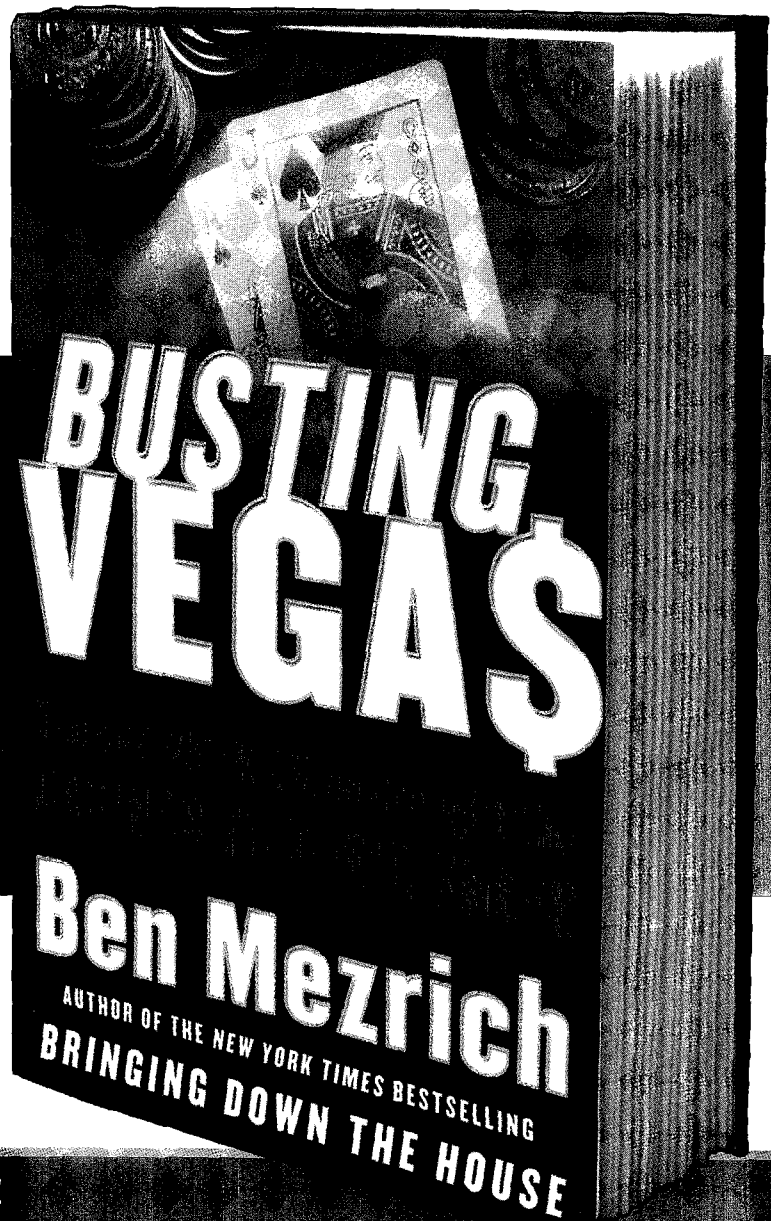
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Misfit America

Many of the values and cultural attributes that once made the United States unique have eroded; those that remain look increasingly ugly to some foreigners. Is our evolving national character a liability in our foreign relations?

BY PAUL STAROBIN

Let's try to think of an original American tableau—the sort of scene, not happening elsewhere, that shows just how very different we are from all others. We might point to the wide-bottomed twelve-year-old, fresh from his double cheeseburger with fries, plunging into the neighborhood pool. Or to the pasty-faced workaholic, hunched over his computer in a lonely cubicle late at night. Death row comes to mind (few other countries routinely execute criminals), and so do images of people freely doing things that would land them in jail elsewhere. No other nation is as legally tolerant of Holocaust deniers, flag burners, and users of the N-word—not even our progenitor the United Kingdom.

But in a shrinking world it is getting harder to think of distinctive American scenes without invoking the Grand Canyon or Maine lobster. It is particularly striking how few of the cutting-edge things in American society are uniquely American. Male teenagers the world over ogle the same pornographic images on the Internet. Circles of friends swap digital photos on their mobile phones in London, Moscow, and Hong Kong just as they do in Los Angeles. Worried about our video-game addicts? It was a South Korean who recently dropped dead after playing the battle-simulation game *StarCraft* for nearly fifty hours straight. Much of what Americans may now think of as culturally or technologically novel has already happened elsewhere: the kind of WiFi system that San Francisco aims to establish in its public places already exists in Tokyo.

As for the things the United States did invent, such as the melting pot and popular democracy, they are being widely (if not always successfully) imitated. Consider, for example, Australia—a fast-growing democracy that has a higher percentage of immigrants than America, and is emerging as an important experiment in multiculturalism. The pro-democracy group Freedom House rates fifty-eight countries as comparable to the United States in political freedom.

If American culture and society are losing their historically distinctive cast, perhaps it is good news—at least for our foreign relations. America has long stood out from the crowd, in ways that seem to have complicated as much as helped our relationships with other states. If a global culture is slowly emerging—if our values have blended with

others through some subtle osmosis—we might expect our international relations to become less fractious.

And yet, as a bruised Karen Hughes, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, can attest, many foreigners not only view Americans as fundamentally different from themselves but also seem to despise the United States. And even though much of that antipathy stems from unpopular U.S. foreign policies, misgivings about America's culture figure prominently too—even among Europeans.

If American culture is less distinctive than it once was, it nevertheless remains unusual in several fundamental respects. Unfortunately, those unique qualities that have faded were usually attractive to foreigners; and many of those that remain are viewed today with discomfort or even disdain.

American exceptionalism, the idea (and the reality) that America is unique, is rooted in part in the populist values arising from the Jacksonian revolution of the 1820s. Frontiersmen battling both the Cherokee and the Boston banker, in a revolt of the muddy boots, drove the country westward and seemed to permanently dispel the Old World vision of America held by Alexander Hamilton and other Founding Fathers. In a speech extolling the wisdom of the “rich and well-born” in matters of governance Hamilton said, “The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right.”

The Jacksonian spirit, the notion that every man is a king, still helps to set America apart. It is evident in the continuing popularity of referenda for settling contentious political issues in a number of states; in many Americans' devotion to gun ownership; and in the particular brand of kick-ass patriotism—sometimes accompanied by Confederate-flag waving—on display in the South, Andrew Jackson's home turf.

But much of the Jacksonian ethos has been lost, especially when it comes to the idea of America as an equal-opportunity society—a basic tenet of this creed and, for that matter, of the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence. Economic mobility has been declining for three decades: a study published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston in 2002 found that since the 1970s U.S. families have

been significantly less likely to move up the income ladder, prompting questions that “go to the heart of our identity as a nation.” (Indeed, by some measurements income mobility is now higher in Canada, France, and the United Kingdom.) One reason is that the children of better-off families begin their schooling with huge advantages over everyone else. The melting pot may still dissolve ethnic differences, but it has accommodated itself to class-based divisions.

These divisions are getting harder to overlook. In luxury-box America an afternoon at the ballpark is less often the class mixer it used to be. Jury duty may be the only experience left in which America’s starched shirts and blue collars sit and sweat together—and it’s mandatory. Just ask the have-not victims of Hurricane Katrina—the ones who were left to fend for themselves in the New Orleans Superdome—about a classless America. The disaster exposed the kind of squalid lives familiar to travelers to Haiti and readers of Graham Greene’s harrowing tales of the Third World.

At the same time, Hamilton’s ghost has returned in the form of a fixation on status and privilege. Although conspicuous consumption is not new in American life (we’ve long had our robber barons), it has spread to sectors of society that are supposed to embody an elevated public-spiritedness. Thus the Louis XIV-type behavior of American University’s president Benjamin Ladner. At a New Year’s dinner to celebrate the engagement of his son, paid for by the university, guests enjoyed truffles and caviar washed down by Cuvée Palmes d’Or champagne. The appalled trustees eventually ousted Ladner, but his actions speak to a larger phenomenon: as the late social critic Christopher Lasch wrote in the mid-1990s, a new and dandified aristocracy of talent has arisen in America. Its members are continuing to remove themselves from common life.

To appreciate the arc we have traveled, just recall the “secular Scripture of the United States,” as the critic Harold Bloom has called *Leaves of Grass*. In 1855 Walt Whitman used the first poem in the collection, “Song of Myself,” to celebrate America as a Jacksonian jumble of disparate types sharing the same adventure.

Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,
A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

I resist any thing better than my own diversity,
Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

Whitman’s poetry also evokes an innocence that once seemed to brand America as refreshingly different from jaded and war-prone Europe; but with America’s climb to global prominence, that, too, has faded. Paradoxically, historians may one day look back on America’s achievement of superpower status—on the arrival of the “American Century”—as the beginning of the end of America’s claim to distinctiveness. The development of the atomic bomb, the landing of the first man on the moon: these were impressive technological achievements, but not marks of national character.

Power tends to make uniform demands on its aspirants.

In America’s case the imperatives of power—building the secretive infrastructure of the national-security state, transforming provincial, sleepy Washington into a fortress-like imperial capital, diminishing the role of Congress in war-making decisions—have eaten at the fiber of popular democracy.

For a time the Cold War masked this. The Soviet Union served as a nearly perfect foil for the United States. Stalin’s monstrous crimes and the lesser evils of his Bolshevik brethren, not to mention the torpor and sheer inanity

of so much of Soviet life, highlighted many of the better and more historically distinctive American qualities, including a commitment to human rights and personal liberty and an aversion to strong state controls. Those ideals may seem less vivid since the fall of the Soviet Union, while the realities of American power unchecked by any rival have been thrown into relief.

Unbridled power tends to breed arrogance and greed no matter who holds it. Perhaps the lesson is that a nation may seek to be either powerful or original, but it is difficult to be both.

So is America still an exceptional country? The answer is yes. Our remaining exceptionalism resides in our culture’s striking combination of deep religious faith and nearly libertarian social permissiveness. These qualities don’t rub elbows easily, and their twinned presence separates the United States from nearly all other countries, rich or poor.



It is well known that Americans are more deeply religious than the citizens of just about any other affluent post-industrial society. In a typical assessment the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that 59 percent of respondents in America answered the question "How important is religion in your life?" with "Very important," compared with 33 percent in the United Kingdom, 30 percent in Canada, 27 percent in Italy, 21 percent in Germany, 12 percent in Japan, and 11 percent in France. Across the past several decades religiosity has fallen steeply in all these places except America. And although Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that religion is very important to them, religious belief is still far more intense in the blue states than in the rich, modern patches of ground outside the United States.

Unbridled power tends to breed arrogance and greed. Perhaps the lesson is that a nation may seek to be either powerful or original, but it is difficult to be both.

Of course, that doesn't mean the United States is unique in its religious character—just that it is unique among rich nations. In this regard America is more like, say, Chile and Turkey. We are also like those countries, and unlike Europe, in our attachment to certain conservative social values that tend to be associated with traditional religious conviction. Thus America, Chile, and Turkey—but generally not the countries of Western Europe—score high in surveys of such values as patriotism and the importance of family. These aspects of our culture are not vestigial; they are active and self-renewing.

Of course, America is culturally quite different from Chile and Turkey in other core respects. Unlike the inhabitants of those relatively poor countries, or of Egypt and Pakistan, most Americans are not preoccupied with economic survival. An emphasis on survival, economic or physical, tends to draw societies inward and make them fearful of outsiders and of change. Cultural conformity is often valued, and duty to family and community preferred over individual pursuits. Survivalist societies also tend to welcome state ownership of industry, and tend not to value educating women or protecting the environment. America has had survivalist periods, but since World War II survivalist values have held little sway.

Rather, Americans—like the Swedes, the French, the Australians, and other rich peoples—focus on the infinite variety of leisure and educational activities that our wealth permits us to pursue. The ascendant value in this domain is one that has always been dear to the American character: personal autonomy, the ability to do one's own thing.

Having a foot in both fixed traditionalism and permissive modernism makes us still something of an outlier nation—astride both camps and at home in neither.

Some may argue that the coincidence of interests, not values, is what counts in foreign relations. But values are interests of a kind; shared values might dispose other nations to help achieve America's purposes in the world, and deeply conflicting values might limit trust and cause other nations to ascribe the worst motives to the United States. Whatever "realists" may think, good will is important both in maintaining alliances and in avoiding crises.

In the current climate, marked by widespread ill will over the Iraq War, our unusual combination of values probably works against us: traditional societies tend to see us as more permissive than we actually are, and permissive societies as more traditional than we actually are. And in an age of shared global experiences American values may come to be defined as those that

others don't want. The future may therefore look friendless and isolated for superpower America, even after George W. Bush leaves office.

Fortunately, however, things are not quite as bleak as they look. In a less contentious time America's unique blend of qualities might cause some societies to reach out to us. Every nation has at least one important value in common with multifaceted America—and the natural bond between the United States and some other powers, both established and rising, is stronger than one might think. A brief tour of the world, with values in mind, reveals a lot about our likely future relationships.

The Arab and broader Muslim world, the most problematic terrain today, seems a natural place to start. Since 9/11 there has been considerable debate over whether Arab resentment of the United States results from "who we are" or "what we do." Without a doubt, what we do has not always helped our position. In both the Arab world and other Muslim lands America is widely seen as unfaithful to its own founding principle of justice for all, largely because it favors Israel at the expense of Arabs, but also because of its prisoner-abuse scandals, including Abu Ghraib, which have come while the United States presses Egypt and other countries to improve their treatment of prisoners. The American double standard affords a wide opening for hateful tirades by Islamic radicals. Conceivably, America could narrow that opening by living up to the values it claims to cherish.

But changing our behavior would be unlikely to solve our problems in the Middle East; our permissive social values are in fundamental conflict with its traditional ones. This conflict

will no doubt persist for a long time, as Edward S. Walker Jr., the president of the Middle East Institute, in Washington, explains. Over the course of four decades Walker has served as ambassador to several Middle Eastern states, including the United Arab Emirates. These are “societies that have just come out of the desert,” he told me. “When I graduated from high school, in 1958, it was the first year that the UAE had a high school.” This perspective, even more than Islamic culture, shapes their attitude toward American values.

The Arab world, already prone to distrust America as an imperial successor to the British, now tends to focus on—and sometimes fear—the export of American culture. Hollywood portrays Americans as alarmingly expressive and permissive in every corner of their lives, from the bedroom to the classroom. “We are seen as an agent of change—in some sense as attacking tradition,” Walker says. This is particularly the case with respect to images of the “liberated” American woman. In Saudi Arabia, remember, women still are not allowed to drive.

As for China, a largely secular yet in many ways traditional, family-oriented society, the operative mode has been ambivalence. “Chinese images of America are positive and negative simultaneously,” says David Shambaugh, who directs the China-policy program at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs and wrote a 1991 book, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972–1990*, on this theme.

The balance of opinion these days, however, leans negative. In a June 2005 Pew Global Attitudes survey only 42 percent of the Chinese gave America an overall favorable rating, though 70 percent viewed Americans as inventive. They liked America better back in the 1980s.

In part this negative rating represents a communitarian society’s opinion of America as distressingly individualistic. “They have had an increasing amount of contact with the United States, and that contact has not increased their admiration,” Shambaugh says. “They perceive racism, crime, inequality, neglect of the elderly, and many other negative aspects of American society.”

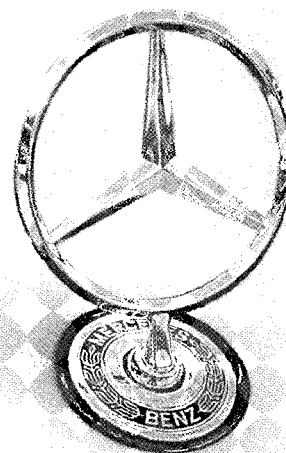
China’s disenchantment could have long-term consequences. The Chinese already seem to be shifting their sights away from America and toward Europe as a place worth befriending. Since Europe and China announced their “strategic partnership” to bring about a multipolar world, in 2003, Europe has become China’s No. 1 trade partner. And many of the Chinese students who might have flocked to the United States now get their degrees in Europe, where tuition is cheaper and visas are easier to come by. China may adopt elements of our capitalist model, but it is unlikely to come to view itself as our protégé.

America’s religiosity, which helps frame our view of the Chinese, is not a major factor in their view of us. Western

Europeans, however, are apt to see America’s religious values as a defining mark of character—and not a positive one. Respondents to the Pew survey in France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Germany think we are too religious. Many Europeans view the United States as a kind of crusader nation, wreaking havoc in the world. That picture is a caricature, and Europeans—whose media have informed them that blue America is nearly as big as red America, and that the war in Iraq has become unpopular in the States—undoubtedly know it. Yet they fixate on their differences with us, and they are faithful, sometimes gleeful, chroniclers of every American deviance from the Jacksonian creed, such as our growing economic inequality and the corruption of our political system by big money.

But such criticism masks the convergence of American and European attitudes on issues of personal autonomy, including abortion, euthanasia, and gay rights. And though desert Arabs may obsess about sexually (and professionally) empowered American women, the modern women’s movement is a transatlantic production, as much Simone de Beauvoir as Betty Friedan. Even on the death penalty, a long-standing bone of contention between the United States and Europe, America is moving in a European direction, as the Supreme Court cites European precedent in

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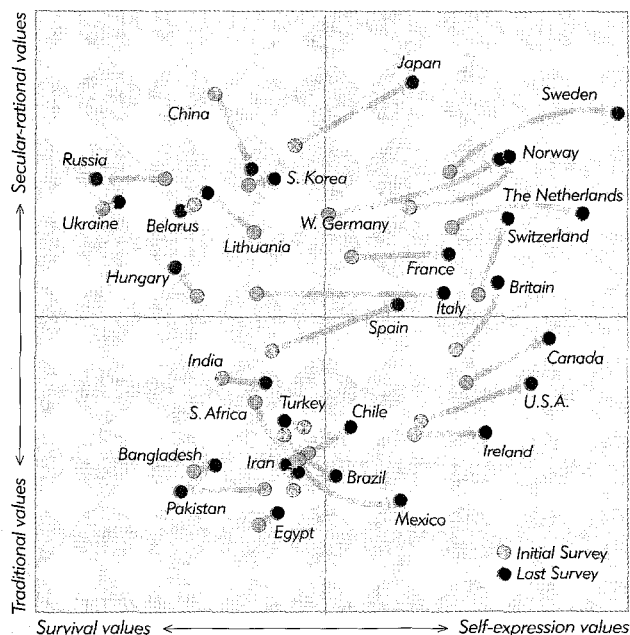
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Mapping America's Values

How our cultural attitudes stack up against those of other countries

The chart below shows the values predominating in thirty countries, as measured by the World Values Survey—an investigation of sociocultural and political change coordinated by Ronald Inglehart, of the Institute for Social Research, at the University of Michigan. Values are plotted along two axes. The vertical axis shows the importance in each country of religion and closely associated beliefs: countries toward the bottom emphasize family and community, reject divorce and abortion, and display a nationalistic outlook. The horizontal axis measures trust, tolerance of outsiders, attitude toward change, and the priority given to individual freedom and self-expression. The arrows indicate how values have changed within each country from the time the country was first surveyed (usually 1981 or 1990) to the time it was last surveyed (usually 2001).



Poor countries tend to cluster in the lower left quadrant of the chart, and rich ones in the upper right quadrant. And indeed, as countries become wealthier, they tend to migrate up and to the right—that is, they become less traditional morally and more individualistic. A number of Asian nations and former members of the Soviet bloc sit in the upper left quadrant; they are largely secular, but also conservative in their views of cultural change. The United States resides in the least populated quadrant: the lower right. America is not entirely alone; a few other rich, English-speaking countries hold similar values. And it appears that some Latin American and South Asian countries are modernizing without losing their traditional religious values. But the United States nonetheless occupies an unusual position: no other country is both as religious and as permissive.

Source: *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*, Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel

decisions curtailing capital punishment for juveniles and the mentally retarded. There is still no global region with which America has more in common than Europe.

Europe emphasizes differences over our similarities because its perspective is warped by envy, which has been evident since the reports of the earliest European visitors to America; the calm, clear-eyed Alexis de Tocqueville is a notable exception. Historically, the most envious have been not the French but the English—which should not be surprising, since we emerged from their womb only to defeat and then to surpass them. (Typical in this regard were Frances Trollope and her novelist son, Anthony, who on their visits to the new nation took issue with virtually every aspect of the American “persona,” including the demand of the “adult infant” for “fresh ice in his water.”)

Europe’s envy of America is probably forever, but it isn’t and never has been an insurmountable obstacle to amicable relations. America is now in part being punished for the sin of re-electing George W. Bush; presumably there will be some forgiveness if post-Bush America is governed by a less easily cartooned figure.

A variant of the envy distortion can be found in post-Soviet Russia, a humiliated land now gripped by survival values. As a foreign correspondent I was based in Moscow for four years, from 1999 to 2003, and I was surprised at how the Cold War seemed to live on for so many Russians. Rich, powerful America is resented, and perhaps not so much disliked as distrusted. In the Pew survey 52 percent of Russians gave the United States a favorable opinion rating—slightly lower than the British but higher than the Dutch, the Germans, or the Spanish. Yet Russians are wary of U.S. efforts to exploit the Soviet collapse, and of the expansion of NATO to include former Soviet satellites.

If Russia can put the Cold War in the past, the two countries could build a genuine friendship—one based on something more than Russia’s oil and America’s interest in consuming it. Religious sensibility is returning to Russia; one of the more intriguing trends in post-Soviet Russia is the revival of the Orthodox Church, whose culturally conservative outlook is something like that of America’s religious right. The ordinary Russian shares the ordinary American’s fear of Islamic terrorism. And the most enterprising Russian businessmen I met were fans of freewheeling American-style capitalism over the more state-regulated European variety.

If Western Europeans and Muslims harp on America’s failure to measure up to its ideals, others, rather amazingly, seem to regard us as arguably more innocent and selfless, truer to the best of the Jacksonian spirit, than we actually are. Indeed, the last, heroic view of America is retained in countries that have chafed under other imperialists and apprehend America as different and better. That perspective is especially prevalent in the former Soviet empire—in places

such as Lithuania and Georgia. In his speech last May in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, Bush was raucously cheered by tens of thousands, much as John F. Kennedy was in his iconic "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" address in West Berlin, in June of 1963.

In such countries, I've found, discussion of America's values inevitably starts with a rant against cruel, conniving, supercilious Moscow. Reform-oriented elites can relate to America's founding in a rebellion against a colonial power; they read the U.S. Constitution and the *Federalist Papers* without irony. Indeed, leaders such as Georgia's president, Mikhail

Are we destined to be disliked, resented, envied, or feared by all the world's larger powers? No.

Saakashvili—the maker of the country's pro-democracy Rose Revolution in 2003—proudly advertise their connections to Washington insiders. When I visited Saakashvili in Tbilisi before the Rose Revolution, I saw on his wall framed photographs of his meetings with Ted Kennedy and other Washington figures. There is undoubtedly an element of geopolitical calculation in small Georgia's eager alliance with America, but the admiration for U.S. political institutions is genuine.

A romance between the Georgias of the planet and America is nice, but is that the best we can hope for? Are we destined to be disliked, resented, envied, or feared by all the world's larger powers? No. One very large power has values remarkably well aligned with ours: India, a democracy of more than a billion people, an economic titan in the making, a nuclear state. In the Pew survey 71 percent of Indians registered a favorable opinion of both the United States and Americans—highest on both counts among the sixteen foreign publics surveyed. When asked where they would go "to lead a good life," only Indians named America as their top choice. (The Poles picked Great Britain, and the British picked Australia, as did the Canadians, the Dutch, and the Germans.) A survey-high 58 percent of Indians—compared with 35 percent of Chinese—said they regarded Americans as honest.

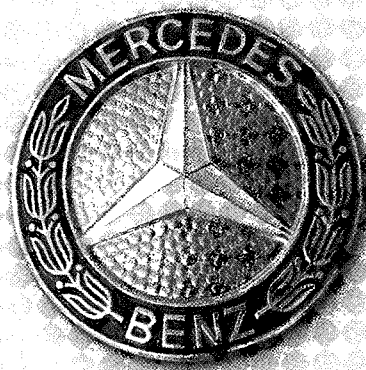
India was a reliable ally of the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Cynics may say that its heart has warmed toward America merely in response to the influx of dollars from outsourcing arrangements. But as Chinese attitudes indicate, dollars don't necessarily buy affection. So why do Indians like America and Americans? I asked Miriam Rajkumar, an Indian citizen who is a South Asia and Middle East nonproliferation analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in Washington. "The Indian public has always been enchanted with the United States," she said. "Many families have someone out here who has done well" in fields like science and high technology.

Of course, the same can be said of other immigrant groups. But perhaps India also thinks well of America. Rajkumar suggested, because it understands from its own history how important an ideal like freedom of religion is. Indians tend to be highly religious, even more so than Americans—and, like Americans, they live in a multicultural, democratic federal state. Moreover, India has Britain, not America, to blame for its trials under colonialism. And America's post-9/11 rise to the challenge of battling Muslim extremism aligns with the long resistance of India to what it views as a Pakistan-inspired Islamic insurgency.

Another element may be at work as well. In international relations—as sometimes in personal ones—too long an acquaintance can be an irritant. But except for some testy episodes in the 1970s in which America sided with Pakistan, the United States and India have little history to mar the honeymoon atmosphere. Indians, unlike those hectoring Europeans and smoldering Chinese, seem content to take America as it is, without judgment. This is a relief. As much as we want to be liked, we are happiest when we are allowed to be our natural selves. In that we are exactly like everyone else. ▀

Paul Starobin is a contributing editor of The Atlantic. His profile of Nursultan Nazarbayev appeared in the December issue.

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Executive Privilege

The CEOs of too many public companies enjoy the power and rewards of ownership without the risks. Corporate values have deteriorated as a result

BY CLIVE CROOK

Warren Buffett, one of the most successful investors the world has ever seen, is also the epitome of a particular style of business leadership—the supreme practitioner of, and spokesman for, old-fashioned virtues in American capitalism. Berkshire Hathaway, the diversified conglomerate he built and still runs, has for years represented prudence, patience, steady calculation, and a zealous advocacy of owners’—that is, stockholders’—interests over those of managers. This old-time, values-driven philosophy, expounded in plain English each year in Buffett’s letter to shareholders, stands in deliberate contrast to Wall Street’s “greed is good” ethos. Still living and working in Nebraska, munching his hamburgers and sipping his Cherry Coke, the Oracle of Omaha is affectingly unglamorous. But, reassuringly, he seems to know something the fast-buck speculators don’t: as Berkshire’s principal shareholder he is worth around \$40 billion.

Last year AIG (American International Group), an insurance giant, came under investigation for accounting irregularities stretching back years—yet another in a long list of recent corporate scandals. The company’s boss, Hank Greenberg, was forced to resign. Among the transactions that attracted regulators’ attention was a deal the company had done with a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway. Last April, Buffett gave evidence to investigators about the transaction. Soon afterward he praised Greenberg as a great insurance pioneer, the “number-one man” in the business. In May, New York’s attorney general, Eliot Spitzer, prosecuting his high-profile campaign to stop corporate abuse, filed suit against Greenberg, alleging that among other things, he had designed sham transactions to make the company appear sounder than it was.

Buffett is held in such high esteem that almost nobody

believed he had behaved improperly—least of all, it seems, Spitzer, who was careful to say that Buffett was not under suspicion. “Warren Buffett is an icon,” said the grand corporate inquisitor. “He has succeeded the right way. He stands for smart, long-term investing, transparency, accountability—all those things we value and support.” (Quite whom

he meant by “we” is unclear.) Still, had things come to this? That a man of Buffett’s matchless reputation might have so much as brushed up against improper business conduct was shocking. All that talk of a crisis of values in American business must be true.

Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia, Tyco—not to mention Martha Stewart, accused of insider trading and jailed for lying to investigators: the tally of actual and alleged corporate sinners is long. It includes companies and executives once famed not just for their spirit of innovation and



their shining business prospects but also in many cases for their drive, their integrity, and their values. Kenneth Lay, the head of Enron, spent last year awaiting trial on multiple charges of fraud and other crimes. He was a self-made man—the son of a part-time preacher, raised in poverty, who went on to become an acclaimed business innovator, a plutocrat-philanthropist, a model boss, Houston’s hometown hero, and a good friend of the first President Bush.

Lay and others were not sleazy small-timers. That is why they raise doubts about the overarching integrity of America’s business culture. Capitalism is underpinned not just by law but by trust, which can be legislated only so far. Parties to contracts need to trust each other. Investors in companies—increasingly at a distance from their assets—need to trust the managers whose salaries, ultimately, they are paying. In the broadest sense, citizens need to trust the system itself, to believe that it has their interests at

heart—or at least that it serves their interests, even if it has no heart. The people who benefit most conspicuously from capitalism are parties to a social contract with the rest of us. The question is, are they in breach?

Put it this way: the terms of the contract are coming under strain. Outright fraud is just one manifestation of the problem, and a narrow one at that. The ostentatious greed of many (law-abiding) CEOs, and their broader lack of accountability to shareholders, are at least as significant.

The division of capitalism's spoils has become more lopsided in recent years. Many workers have seen their wages frozen and their benefits cut. And lately even owners haven't done well: returns to stock-market investments have been poor since 2000. The group that has continued to profit, sometimes spectacularly so, is high-end professional managers—the very group from which corporate criminals are drawn. Over the past ten years the gap in pay between top executives and their subordinates (not to mention workers at the bottom of the scale) has widened a lot, and the trend shows no sign of slowing. In many cases pay schemes that rewarded chief executives generously when share prices were soaring continued to do so as prices tanked. CEOs fired for incompetence, leaving injured companies and distressed investors behind them, sometimes walked away with multimillion-dollar payments. If it isn't fraud and false accounting, one might be forgiven for thinking, it is rapacious salaries, unexpensed options, golden parachutes, and post-retirement use of the corporate jet. Not every kind of compensation is being driven down by global competition.

Unseemly executive behavior has outlasted the stock-market boom of the late 1990s, but it nonetheless has roots within that boom. Both the prevailing corporate culture and—just as important—investors' expectations shifted significantly during that time, and neither has shifted back entirely.

In the late 1990s growth in productivity accelerated, and share prices—especially in technology—soared. It was a new economic era. As at the dawning of previous new economic eras, the old rules were said to no longer apply. Investors were prodded in the chest and told they either got it or they didn't. Financial orthodoxy and traditional business virtues were mocked. Financial inhibitions were cast aside. Rather than watching sports, investors of modest means watched television pundits pick stocks. Some quit their jobs to become day traders—and did well, because it is hard to lose money in a rising market. Accountants (accountants, for heaven's sake!) were invited to seminars on “thinking outside the box.”

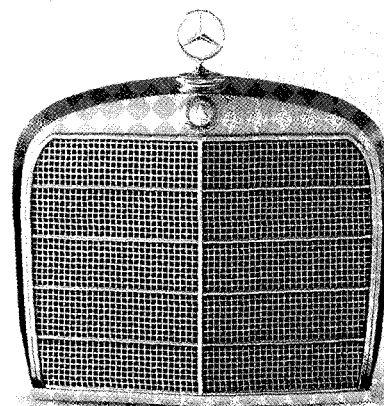
This climate of opinion did not merely tolerate financial heterodoxy but demanded it. In 2001 a writer at *Fortune* was the first to ask questions about Enron's bookkeeping—

but not before the magazine had hailed the company as America's most innovative for six years running. The firm's auditors missed what was going on; but so did its creditors, its analysts on Wall Street, the press, and everybody else. The mood of the moment prevailed.

In this environment CEOs were often anointed as visionaries. Naturally, celebrity bosses are expected to be buccaneers—and they often are, disdaining advice and believing what they read about themselves in the papers. Many disdain the rules as well; rules are for the timid. Most hazardous of all, they tend to forget that (in the case of public companies) they are employees of the firms they lead, and not owners—that they are fiduciaries, entrusted with the care of other people's money. Hence their too frequently outlandish pay deals; hence, in many instances, their taste for ventures that a conscientious fiduciary would have regarded as too risky.

How did the real owners come to let this happen? The answer lies partly in the changing pattern of shareholding. Large shareholders in a company have both the means and the motive to remind managers whom they are working for—to insist that costs (including managers' pay) be contained and assets not squandered

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on reckless new ventures or vanity projects. Shareholders with small diversified holdings are unable to exercise such influence; they can only vote with their feet, choosing either to hold or to sell their shares, according to whether they think that managers are doing a good job overall. Shareholdings have become more dispersed in recent decades, and the balance of power has thereby shifted from owners to managers.

Lay and others were not sleazy small-timers. That is why they raise doubts about the overarching integrity of America's business culture.

The growth of institutional investment—through pension funds and mutual funds—accelerated this trend. In many ways, of course, it has been a boon for popular capitalism, giving people who are not wealthy the opportunity to save more effectively, and giving millions of Americans a real stake in the economy for the first time. But it has also created a class of owners who do not behave like traditional owner-capitalists. The typical investor in pension or mutual funds may be entirely unaware of what shares the funds hold. The institutions themselves, it was once believed, would behave like owner-capitalists—but on the whole, for a variety of reasons, they have not. They see their job as picking stocks and trading them; except in the most extreme cases, they think, it is not their role to hold company managers to account. Index funds, which have grown in popularity, take this practice to the extreme—they explicitly refuse to make *any* judgments about companies, and instead seek to hold a representative basket of stocks, with no attention to the performance of individual companies.

Ownership has grown more distant and diffuse only slowly, over decades. But in the late 1990s the effect of that diffusion on the control exercised over managers was suddenly magnified by a complacency born of strong returns. Investors came to expect extraordinary returns all the time, without paying much attention to how they were generated. The message to managers was clear: gung-ho risk-taking was in, and cautious stewardship was out. Far from resisting this shift, investors cheered it on.

Even though the boom is now over, surprisingly little has changed. If anything, the structure of ownership is more diffuse. And investors have only partly lost their appetites for vainglorious corporate leadership. Today celebrity CEOs are no longer quite the rage they were in the late 1990s, but the delusional desire to crown corporate bureaucrats—not merely the handful of genuine

visionaries—as business heroes is still there. If an outright economic slump had followed the stock market's fall in 2001, bubble modes of thinking might have been more thoroughly renounced. But Alan Greenspan's Fed contrived a soft landing, so the mental correction was comparatively mild as well.

To be sure, the boom of the late 1990s had a real foundation, and the economy continues to benefit. Behind the stock market's astonishing rise lay a surge in economy-wide productivity; behind that lay the growth of the Internet and the development of new business processes aimed at taking advantage of information technology. Those forces are by no means spent. If, as many economists now believe, long-term productivity growth has increased by a full percentage point from its average in the 1970s and 1980s—from 1.5–2.0 percent a year to 2.5–3.0 percent—that represents a genuine transformation in the country's economic prospects.

The catch, it seems, is lower standards of corporate governance. This is a shame, but it may just be the way of the world. Eliminating episodes of irrational exuberance and the errors that attend them would require eliminating the underlying economic transformation as well—which would be undesirable even if it could be done.

Nowhere is the noxious blend of unwarranted expectations and occluded oversight more apparent today than in the growth of hedge funds: largely unregulated companies that invest in a wide range of sometimes exotic financial instruments, generally leveraging their holdings (that is, multiplying risk and return with borrowed money). Precise figures are hard to come by, but the amount under management by the 8,000 or so such funds appears to have doubled over the past five years, to about \$1 trillion.

Driving this growth is disappointment at stock-market returns since 2000. The boom taught investors to expect high returns year in and year out. For most investments this was too much to ask after the tech bubble burst, yet some hedge funds were able to maintain impressive returns even as equity markets sank. Exactly how they did it remains a mystery, because they typically disclose little about their investment methods. For some investors that seems only to increase their allure. To the mystique of the corporate shaman add the mystique of the hedge-fund wizard.

Hedge-fund clients are typically unaware not only of the companies (or governments, or currencies, or other financial markets) they are invested in but also of the instruments used, and the scale or nature of the risks taken. A hedge-fund investor is a pure speculator, in no way a capi-

talist—not even in the modern, eviscerated sense of that term. This is not to say that hedge funds serve no useful economic purpose. But they are risky, they are opaque, and they mean we are asking for trouble. Don't be surprised if more than a handful of hedge funds go off the rails in the next few years.

If a hedge fund collapsed without wider repercussions, it would hardly matter. People understand that hedge-fund investors take a big risk; they feel little sympathy (probably the opposite) for gamblers who lose their shirts. But the failure of a big hedge fund, or a cascade of failures, might well have wider repercussions. Because many funds rely on borrowing, rising interest rates might cause several to fail at once. And because these funds manipulate very large sums, any banks that had lent to them, directly or indirectly, might be put in jeopardy.

What is to be done? Corporate scandals have already elicited one major regulatory response: the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, known as SOX, a far-reaching reform of corporate-governance law. SOX is an important law; nonetheless, it frames the issue in a narrow way. It focuses on auditing—that is, on the quality of the information that companies put before their investors and other interested parties. The law aims to make auditors more independent of managers—for instance, by forbidding them to offer companies various non-auditing services alongside their normal work, a practice that has given rise to conflicts of interest. It obliges firms to document their internal financial controls, and requires managers—on pain of criminal penalties—to attest to the adequacy of those controls. SOX ended self-regulation in the industry and created a new body to oversee the auditing profession: the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board.

Auditing reform was surely needed, though it is not yet clear whether SOX is a well-designed answer. Its measures are complex—perhaps too complex to restore investors' trust in published accounts—and the cost of compliance is heavy.

More fundamental, the SOX prescription does not go to the heart of the problem. Essentially, its remedy is more financial controls. But the instances of corporate abuse at Enron and elsewhere did not arise from lack of controls. They occurred because the companies' most senior executives overrode controls that were already in place and then plotted to hide what they had done. SOX may make that more difficult in the future, but it certainly won't stop the practice altogether.

Beyond SOX, what? "First, do no harm" is a good rule. Modern American capitalism has charges to answer, but it is best to keep a sense of proportion. The U.S. economy remains the most productive—and by almost any measure

the most successful—in the world. This cannot be because America has the wisest politicians, the most judicious regulators, or the smartest captains of industry; the global playing field in those areas would seem to be pretty level. America's economic pre-eminence must have something to do with its distinctive business model, the very model many people now question—which in different ways continues to reward success more generously and punish failure more brutally (options and parachutes notwithstanding) than the milder systems to be found in, for instance, Europe and Japan. If one values mainly productivity, innovation, and incomes in the aggregate, then the model is working beautifully compared with foreign alternatives.

New regulations could, and probably should, force companies to give shareholders more power over managers. But today's shareholders, individual and institutional alike, rarely exercise the rights they already have. Often, when managers let owners down and confidence in capitalism falters, investors are at least partly to blame. Even if they are not cheering the managers on to greater feats of daring, they are failing to demand probity and accountability. It all comes down to traditional values. One of the oldest maxims of commercial virtue is still the best: Buyer beware. ■

Clive Crook is a senior editor of The Atlantic.

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Two Cheers for Hypocrisy

As the Gallup Organization has discovered, the young are another country—and one day it's going to be ours

BY P. J. O'ROURKE

What is on the mind of American youth? Well, of course—but youth must spend a little time thinking about something besides *that*. Youth has its opinions, ideas, and ideals. And youth will inherit the nation. Although by the time the Baby Boom, that entrenched Court of Chancery, is done with its *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce* of a national patrimony, youth won't be very young. Yet presumably the formative years produce values that endure. (Would that the bodily forms of the formative years endured so well.)

One way to find out what young people are thinking is to ask them. From time to time the Gallup Organization does this, querying groups of approximately 500 to 1,000 youngsters aged thirteen to seventeen. The teens are chosen randomly, but with an organized randomness, which is the mystery of opinion polling. This allows Gallup to assert that it has "95% confidence that the maximum error attributable to sampling and other random effects is ± 5 percentage points." Gallup does, however, add a caveat: "Question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings." So the following information, drawn from a baker's dozen of teen opinion polls, is, on average, reliable—as reliable, that is, as adolescents, on average, are.

Gallup tells us that the political values of young people are startlingly unstartling. Seventy-one percent say their views on politics are "about the same" as those of their parents. This from kids all born since 1988, who have never known a towering national leader, let alone a noble one. Consider the electoral flora among which teens have grown up: scrubby Bushes; weedy, tangled Dukakis; over-ripe Dole; deadwood Gore; and Kerry full of prickles and thorns. Nothing large or impressive has grown in this political jungle except an egotistically bloated and morally obese couple of Clintons and a Gingrich. That's what their parents voted in, and young people say it's fine by them.

The kids could be lying to the pollsters. In 1970, when I was a kid (or anyway still acting like one), a census form was delivered to a disreputable pad where I was crashed. To this day in the U.S. Census Bureau files there is record of a three-room apartment in Columbus, Ohio, occupied by 240 Native Americans and the Gautama Buddha.

But "I'm just like my mom and dad" is such a tepid fib. Perhaps lukewarm is to teens today what shit-hot or cool

as a cucumber was to teens of yore. A full 56 percent of contemporary adolescents say their politics are "moderate," while a total of just 13 percent call themselves either "very conservative" or "very liberal." And among that 13 percent the difference is split in a happy medium almost down the middle. Never mind that only 38 percent of adults call themselves moderates, despite all the dull throes of moderation that adulthood entails.

According to Gallup, 30 percent of teenagers identify themselves as Republicans, 37 percent as Democrats, and 27 percent as independents—a statistical distribution that could have been produced without the bother of polling, by a reasonably honest three-card monte dealer.

I'd have expected more left-wingers among the young. This is not because of the Long March through the educational institutions that the lefties of my generation supposedly took. In my experience, teachers' opinions don't affect students. Admittedly, I went to high school in the era of the dinosaurs. Mr. Jarokowski, the phys-ed instructor, comes to mind. But if pupils were influenced by pedagogues, Woodstock would have featured Patti Page. No, it's that being young is a socialist experience. Children live in the only successful Marxist state ever created: the family. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" is the family's practice as well as its theory. Even with today's scattershot patterns of marriage and parenting, a family is collectivist to a more than North Korean degree. And—again according to Gallup—kids do not consider this communism to be oppressive. Seventy-three percent of teens say the family provides them freedom. Eighteen percent go so far as to say they're too free. As a simple matter of social continuity, kids should be out knocking on doors for Ralph Nader or Dennis Kucinich.

On the other hand, I'd also have expected more right-wingers among the young—at least if I'm to believe what else Gallup tells me. Forty-four percent of the teens who attended church or synagogue in the week before the political-ID poll was taken planned to vote Republican. Mosque, let us note, was not mentioned. Even so, the implication is that religious teens are more conservative than their fellows. And information from two additional Gallup polls, whose subjects are "The Word of God" and "The Origin of Species," indicates that teens are every bit as religious as their

constant pronouncements of “ohmigod” would indicate.

Eighty-five percent of teenagers believe that the Bible is the actual or the inspired word of God. Eighty-one percent believe that evolution either was guided by God or just plain never happened. Teens apparently believe God even more than they believe their parents. And (I say this as a practicing Christian) on slimmer evidence, given adolescent knowledge of theology and science versus adolescent knowledge of Mom and Dad.

Thirty-eight percent of teenagers claim they subscribe to the following statement: “God created humans pretty much in their present form within the last 10,000 years or so.” This sounds like hard-shell boobocracy even to those of us who think “survival of the fittest” has a faintly tautological whiff. There are 20,000-year-old cave paintings in the Dordogne aesthetically superior to the stained glass in most churches. But we should not necessarily assume an upsurge in teen fundamentalism or future membership in the GOP. When I was in high school, I was one of at least 38 percent of students who subscribed to the statement “ $2b + (x^2 - y^2) = I$ couldn’t care less.” And listening to teens or reading their text messages shows that 100 percent of them couldn’t care less about grammar.

The young are adept at learning but even more adept at avoiding it. For example, Gallup maintains that 39 percent of teens think the Bible is the “actual word of God” (presumably in English, just as Jesus spoke it). And nearly a quarter of those who do not identify themselves as born-again Christians still say this. Forty-six percent of teens think the Bible is the “inspired word of God.” Another 14 percent think it’s an “ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by man.” Many middle- and secondary-school students may read the Bible (or tell Gallup pollsters that they do). But it is also my understanding that many students read (or need to say that they have read) *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker. I’d guess that a similar poll about the latter work would generate similar answers concerning whether Ms. Walker’s words are “actual,” “inspired,” or “ancient,” with similar bored confusion as to what adults mean by the terms. (And before we dismiss teenagers as complete chowderheads, consideration should be given to Gallup’s statement that 45 percent of American adults believe man was plopped down

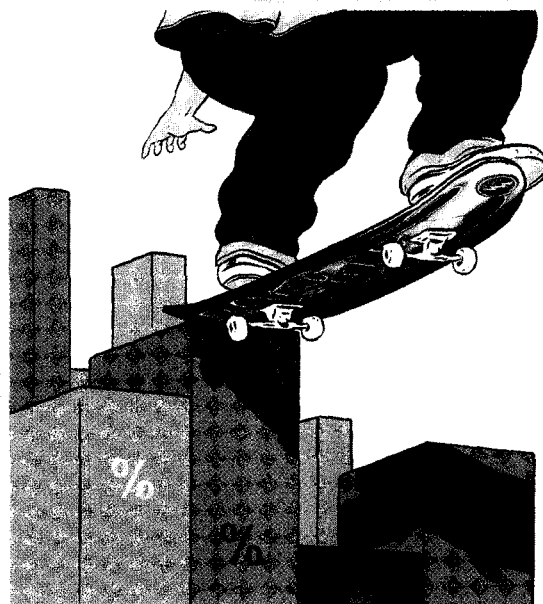
on earth sometime since 8000 B.C., just like he is today, in Dockers and Nikes, the spitting image of God.)

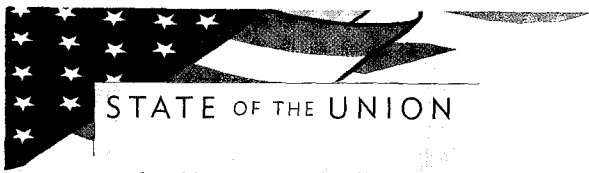
Let’s admit that we aren’t interested in teen political and religious values. The kids can’t vote until they’re eighteen and don’t vote much once they are. Plus, God is well known as an old softy when it comes to kids; privately even predestinarians and sticklers for infant baptism think so. What we really want to know is what teenagers are doing in the back seats of cars. Although given the modern subcompact “tuner”-style cars favored by teens, and given their modern parents, who stay at work until six or eight in the evening, it’s probably been a long time since anything other than the stashing of beer cans and bongos has been done in the back seats of cars.

I have not seen a Gallup poll asking the questions that every parent (and prig and lecher) wants to ask. And it may be just as well if Gallup doesn’t bother. Gallup does ask, “What Are Teens Doing After School?” Forty-four percent say homework. Only 12 percent admit to “playing video games.” A paltry five percent concede that they “talk on the phone.” I say, “LOL” (“laughing out loud”), as the 11 percent who confess to being “on the computer” would put it.

Fifty-six percent of teens say “young people should abstain from sex until marriage.” Sixty-four percent of teenage girls say so. What kind of abstinence they say they’re favoring, however, is open to interpretation. Gallup, in its analysis of this poll finding, brings in a professed expert on the subject, a “clinician and health educator” at a “teen sexual health center in suburban New Jersey.” The expert avers, “Oral sex has become a popular way to postpone intercourse. Teens don’t think of it as having sex.” For another poll, titled “Teens’ Marriage Views Reflect Changing Norms,” Gallup brings in additional experts, from something called the National Marriage Project, at Rutgers University. (As long as Gallup is being New Jersey-centric, maybe Bruce Springsteen should have been questioned too.) The Rutgers people declare that 65 percent of young people have sex before they finish high school.

Put expert testimony together with a supposition that a few teens continue to use the ten-cent birth-control device advocated by parochial school nuns: a dime between your knees. Then add the observable fact that a fair portion of high





school boys are still collecting Star Wars figurines and don't need a Yoda mask to go to a Halloween party. The conclusion is that regular teens are going at it like the Navy in port.

Our adolescents are hypocrites. And let's not forget that there are worse values than hypocrisy. A hypocrite knows good from bad, and maybe even right from wrong. This is more, it seems, than can be said for a certain former majority leader of the House of Representatives or several former reporters from CBS and *The New York Times*.

Whether or not teenagers act on their morals, they have a strong moralistic streak. Ninety-five percent consider "married men and women having an affair" to be morally unacceptable. Lively teen imaginations may be at work here, with mental pictures of icky grown-up bodies doing the deed. Still, the kids are within a ± 5 percentage-point sampling error of total condemnation.

If what these teens say is factual, they are so different from the adolescents of my heyday that they may be the spawn of alien invaders.

In the matter of abortion, 72 percent of teens consider it morally wrong, and 32 percent would make it illegal in all circumstances (compared with 17 percent of adults who take this absolutist view). And if we inspect the poll numbers on what might be called "Right to Life Lite," we find that 55 percent of teens believe medical testing on animals is immoral as well.

Perhaps logic is not to be expected from moralists, let alone very young ones. While nearly three quarters of kids think abortion is morally wrong, only 42 percent think having a baby outside of marriage is morally acceptable. What's a girl to do? And though practically all adolescents condemn adultery, two thirds of them condone divorce. Maybe this is credulity, and the kids really believe that their parents are divorcing "for the sake of the children" and not for the sake of the pool boy or the twenty-six-year-old executive assistant. Divorce famously imposes more hardships on women than on men, but 74 percent of teenage girls countenance split-ups, versus only 58 percent of boys. That confirms a suspicion that divorced dads take their sons to sporting events on alternate weekends, while divorced moms complain about divorced dads to their daughters nonstop.

Although fewer than half of teenagers think it's all right to have sex before marriage, 62 percent think "young people are responsible enough to be sexually active" at age eighteen or younger. Meanwhile, only 41 percent think they are responsible enough to drink alcohol before they're twenty-one. Kids are apparently unfazed by the idea that

they can be old enough to vote, join the Army, get married, make babies, be tried as adults and executed by lethal injection, but as for having a beer ...

Such conundrums cast more doubt, not so much on the values of youth as on the value of polling teens. Gallup itself provides the strongest case for skepticism. In a poll on alcohol use an improbable 17 percent of teens say they have "occasion to use alcoholic beverages." Only nine percent say they've been a passenger in a car driven by a teen under the influence of alcohol. And seven percent (the few, the defiant) admit to having been that driver. If the preceding numbers are even remotely factual, we are dealing with adolescents so different from those of my heyday that they may be the spawn of intergalactic alien invaders. Either that or we really *do* have a horrific drug problem in this country. Kids have abandoned knocking back brewskis and have taken up imbibing godawful substances we've probably never heard of. (I have a fuzzy recollection that this has happened before.)

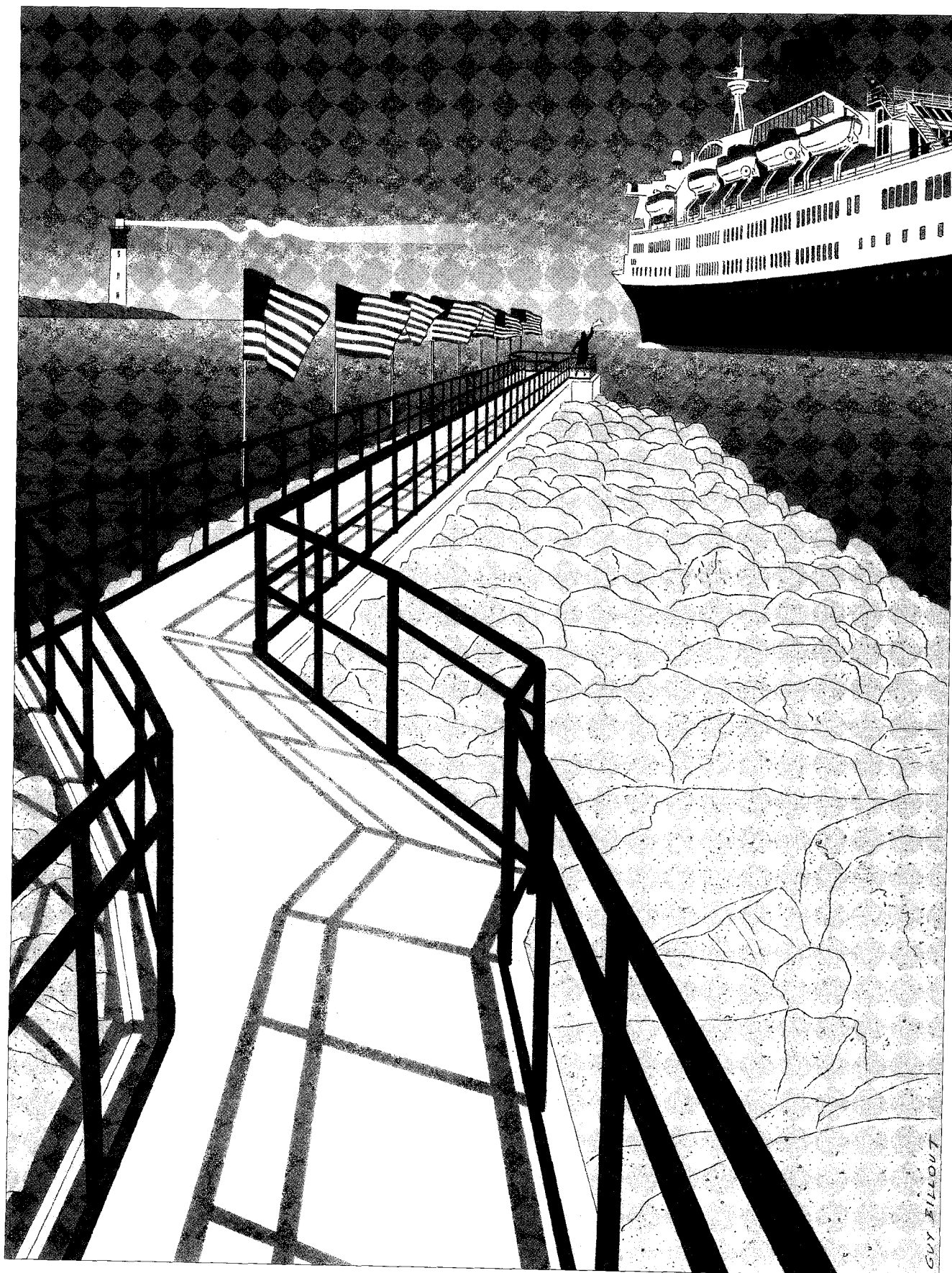
Kids will find some way to alter their painfully acute and frustratingly inchoate little consciousnesses. For a sample of teen consciousness I give you the following from a Gallup poll titled "What Frightens America's Youth?" As would be expected in a generation for whom 9/11 is the most shocking event in the history of mankind, the most common fear is terrorism. But what is the fear that comes in only one percentage point behind terrorism? Spiders.

The kids are yanking our chain. They have taken to heart the W. H. Auden poem "Under Which Lyre," which cheers the eternal war that young, playful, mischievous Hermes wages against mature, pompous, government-approved and corporate-sponsored Apollo. I doubt the kids have taken the poem to heart literally, or know of Auden or of Hermes, except as a brand of bling. But in their own thoughtless way they're thinking,

Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
Or quizzes upon World-Affairs,
Nor with compliance
Take any test. Thou shalt not sit
With statisticians nor commit
A social science.

As to what values youth in fact has, time will tell. But time will not tell us much, because we'll be senile or dead. Meanwhile, the path to greater wisdom is not charted by the interrogation of teenagers—or, probably, by the interrogation of anyone, whether in a Gallup poll, at Guantánamo Bay, or in anonymously sourced deep-think interviews for important periodicals. We'd be better off heeding the Dian Fossey lesson: We know as much as we do about gorillas because they cannot speak. ▀

P.J. O'Rourke is a correspondent for The Atlantic. His most recent book is Peace Kills.



FAREWELL by Guy Billout

THE FAILURE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS

Jefferson, Marshall, and the Rise of Presidential Democracy
BRUCE ACKERMAN

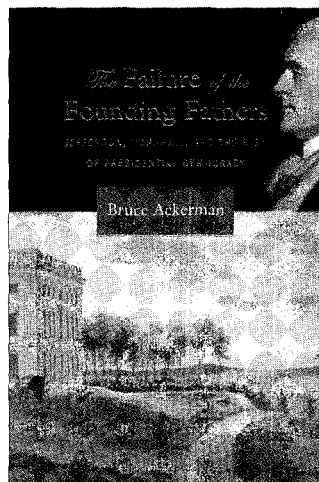
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THE SOUTHERN PAST

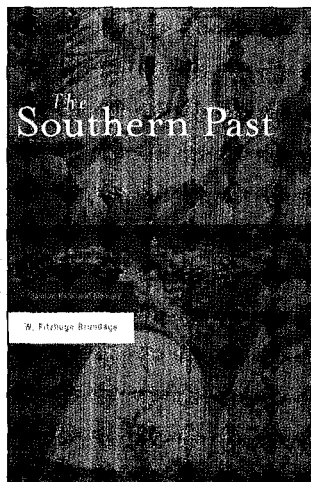
A History of the Old South
W. FITZGERALD BRUNDAGE

"As *The Southern Past* painfully affirms, the definition of just who and what a Southerner is remains cloudy even today...Brundage's research attests to the enormous extent

to which Southern whites reshaped antebellum history to suit their own, reshaped memories of the Old South. In the eyes of white hagiographers, blacks were little more than bit players on the larger stage of Southern history. Slavery became an incidental cause of the Civil War."

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RICHMOND TIMES
DISPATCH

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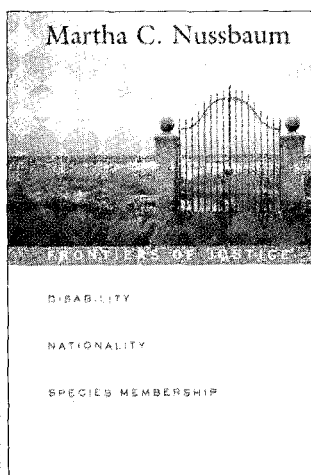
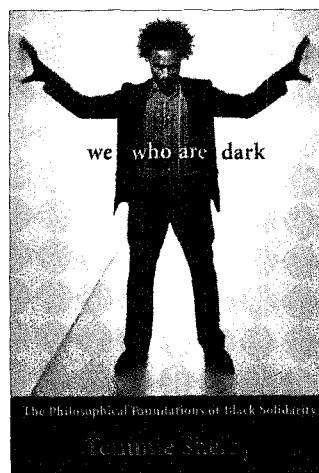
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The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity
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BOOKS & CRITICS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

THIS MONTH:

Chicago Architecture and Design

by Jay Pridmore and
George A. Larson

Chicago Architecture: Histories, Revisions, Alternatives

edited by Charles Waldheim and
Katerina Rüedi Ray

Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City

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reviewed by Benjamin Schwarz
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Forever by Judy Blume

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Margaret by Judy Blume

"The Lost Children of Rockdale County" produced by Rachel Dretzin

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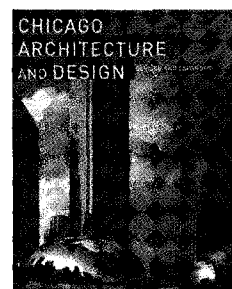
EDITOR'S CHOICE

The Not-So-Second City

What to read this month—and what not to

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

Affirming the evident, the American Institute of Architects recently judged Chicago the city with the finest architecture in the country. To take the obvious a bit further, Chicago holds more important buildings of the past century and a half than any other place in the world. And to look at it another way, Chicago's architecture constitutes one of this country's greatest contributions to modern civilization. Appropriately enough, since Lewis Mumford's 1931 classic *The Brown Decades* and Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson's catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art's 1933 show, *Early Modern Architecture, Chicago, 1870–1910*, writers have produced a wealth of often beautiful books that examine myriad aspects of this rich subject. They've authored inventive social and environmental histories. They've traced the city's architectural evolution, in works like Carl W. Condit's pioneering annals of Chicago's building technology and the Art Institute of Chicago's monumental, multi-authored, gorgeous (but highly selective, often eccentric, and overly specialized) two-volume exhibition catalogue of the city's architecture and design. They've chronicled the lives and careers of the seminal architects—Louis Sullivan, John W. Root, Daniel Burnham, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe—in biographies that range from the workmanlike to the sparkling. They've probed, in meticulous and abundantly illustrated monographs, many of Chicago's most significant structures—including the Glessner, Charnley, and Robie houses and the Carson Pirie Scott building—and the creations of many of its important architectural firms, including Holabird and Roche; Holabird and Root; Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White (GAPW); Keck and Keck; Perkins and Will; and Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM). There's even a book on SOM's interior design, specifically, and the past three years alone saw the publication of definitive works on Adler and Sullivan's Auditorium Building and on the creations of Daniel H. Burnham's firms. All these books, though, are obviously aimed at the cognoscenti, and Chicago's architecture—a national cultural

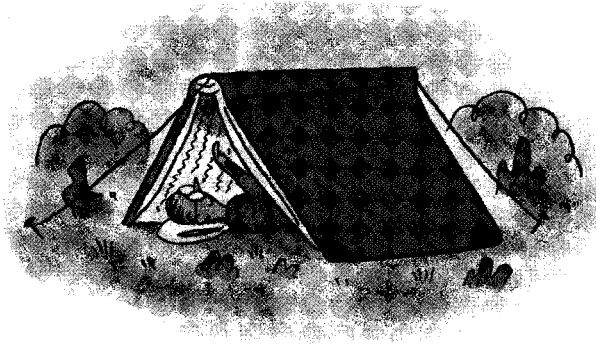


CHICAGO
ARCHITECTURE
AND DESIGN

by Jay Pridmore and
George A. Larson

Abrams

bequest as expressive of this country's creative character as movies and jazz—demands to be illuminated for the general reader. Here the choices have been inadequate. To be sure, two exceptionally incisive and well-written handbooks—the saucy, compact *Chicago's Famous Buildings* and the more comprehensive but even less detailed *ALA Guide*—identify the major edifices and concisely explain their significance; but these books are frustrating, not just because of their brevity and lack of narrative but also because they're arranged geographically, not chronologically, so they obscure the development of and continuities in Chicago's architectural direction and styles. And—an even greater shortcoming—their photographs are uniformly small and in black and white, often unimaginative, and nearly exclusively devoted to exteriors.



This book, a thoroughly revised and greatly expanded edition of a work originally published in 1993, and a wholly satisfying marriage of photography and text, is by far the best introduction for the general reader. Its plenteous, aptly chosen, sometimes stark, sometimes lively, but always extraordinarily comprehensible photographs are mostly drawn from the archives of Hedrich-Blessing, the venerable Chicago architectural-photography studio. Captured in these images are, for instance, the mass and rhythmic grace of H. H. Richardson's near-mythical and long-ago demolished Wholesale Store (but why no picture of Holabird and Roche's demolished Tacoma Building?), the simplicity and power of Burnham and Root's Monadnock Building, the golden light that infuses their Rook-

ery Building, the monumentality and surprising sprightliness of the Auditorium Building, and the almost anachronistic functionalist elegance of Burnham and Atwood's Reliance and Railway Exchange Buildings, with their gently undulating curtain walls of terra-cotta and glass. Most books for the nonspecialist linger with these and other iconic buildings of the Chicago and Prairie Schools and then rush forward to praise the purity and exactness of Mies's IIT campus and his 860/880 North Lake Shore Drive apartments before concluding with a few photographs displaying the post-modernist exuberance of the swaggering, cape-clad Helmut Jahn (long the dominant figure among contemporary Chicago architects). In contrast, Pridmore and Larson properly emphasize the still neglected interregnum of the 1920s and 1930s, as they explicate

and champion the subtle blending of modernism and art deco achieved in Holabird and Root's urbane, sleekly masculine skyscrapers, in GAPW's streamlined Field Building and at once plain and sumptuous Merchandise Mart, and in the

homegrown, pre-Miesian modernism of the houses of Keck and Keck and Paul Schweikher, and the interiors of Marianne Willisch, with their clean and graceful lines and airy, light-filled rooms. Pridmore, who wrote the text, has achieved a feat of synthesis as he chronicles a century and a half of the city's architectural history in a smooth, lucid style that eschews the gaseous abstractions infecting far too much writing about architecture. Even when retailing the frequent and bitter controversies that have marked the past few decades of the Chicago architectural scene—over, say, Jahn's clamorous James R. Thompson Center, Rem Koolhaas's equally cacophonous IIT student center, Thomas Beeby's historically eclectic public library, or John Vinci's restrained, elegant, and unfairly disparaged Arts Club—Pridmore never-

theless remains authoritative and cool. (Though occasionally he weighs in with invariably considered and fair-minded assessments.) Critics in thrall to modernism used to strain to discern connections between the nineteenth-century Chicago School and the International Style that reigned in the city from Mies's arrival there, at the end of the 1930s, through the late 1960s. Pridmore is appropriately skeptical of such efforts, but he's sensitive to the often nuanced continuities in the city's architecture across the decades (continuities impossible to deny, given the interconnections between generations of the city's architects and the historical-mindedness of the architecture profession coupled with the long-recognized unique place the city occupies in the annals of architecture). From the 1870s through at least the 1970s, as Jahn astutely notes in a foreword to the book, the relationship between design and engineering was unusually close (Root excelled equally in the two fields, and the city's architectural history is characterized by such architect-engineer collaborations as Adler and Sullivan and SOM's Bruce Graham and Fazlur Khan). This has engendered buildings distinguished by what the critics Franz Schulze and Kevin Harrington call "a high level of detail, craft, and finish," and ones that far more effortlessly than most reconcile form and function, which is probably one explanation for the most compelling and amorphous quality of Chicago's finest buildings: they usually manage to combine a handsome solidity with a graceful clarity. This means that for me the book's last section, on the globalization of the architecture in Chicago, makes for depressing reading. The most ambitious projects in the city—as in nearly all the world's great cities—get bestowed more and more on what Pridmore nicely calls "international architectural stars," who are designing for Chicago in Los Angeles, New York, Amsterdam, and Osaka. I find that this results in a homogenized, globalized aesthetic. To me, Chicago's best building of the new century is the Sofitel on the Gold Coast (alas, unnoted by Pridmore). Although the

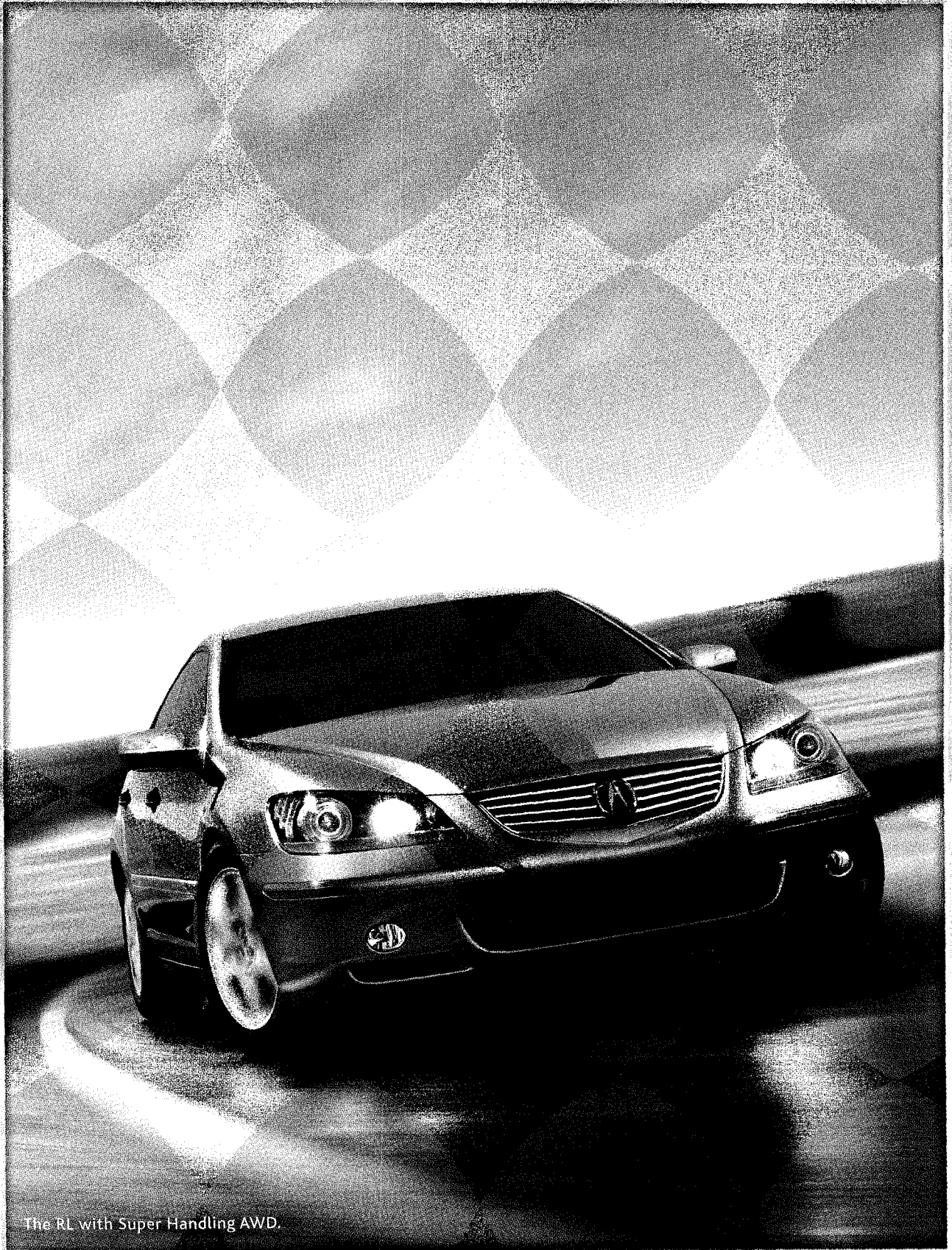


Above: Burnham and Root's The Rookery (1888). Top right: Daniel H. Burnham & Company's Reliance Building (1895). Bottom right: Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House (1909).

Parisian architect Jean-Paul Viguier designed the striking, cantilevered, bladelike, at once slick and luxurious structure, its unusual footprint and modernist look respond marvelously to its site and neighborhood, and Viguier's heroic efforts to "bring the sun into the project" show a sensitivity to both the city's climate and its architectural heritage, which virtually fetishizes openness and natural light. But another structure, the Millennium Park band shell, also designed by an out-of-towner, Frank Gehry, has won the attention and praise; Pridmore, in a rare lapse, judges it "the most spectacular structure to go up in early-

twenty-first-century Chicago." While no doubt dramatic, and apparently an acoustic marvel, the band shell, festooned with the architect's trademark nifty giant stainless-steel ribbons, could of course be anywhere (Angelenos with somewhat untrained eyes would swear they've seen something awfully similar downtown, on Bunker Hill). Despite Chicago's abundance of talented young architects, including Jeanne Gang, "Chicago" architecture is no longer a living tradition. But there's nothing to be done. The forces of globalism, or cosmopolitanism, as Marx both lamented and cheered long ago, are unstoppable.

Chicago Architecture: Histories, Revisions, Alternatives, edited by Charles Waldheim and Katerina Rüedi Ray (Chicago). This wildly uneven book, a collection of self-consciously revisionist essays on the history of Chicago architecture, epitomizes what's right and what's wrong with academe today. Part of the publisher's generally excellent and attractively produced series Chicago Architecture and Urbanism, the book contains several superb pieces—among them a brilliantly fresh re-examination of Holabird and Roche's Marquette Building; an analysis of the commercial, social, and political forces behind the preser-

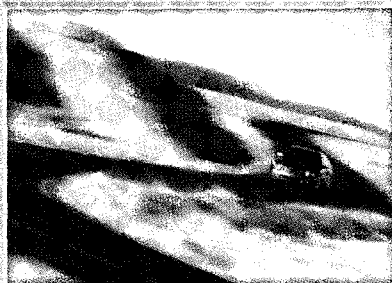


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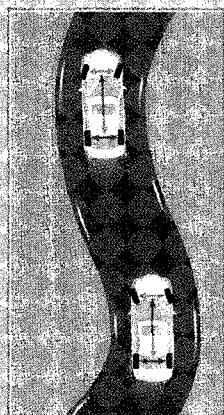
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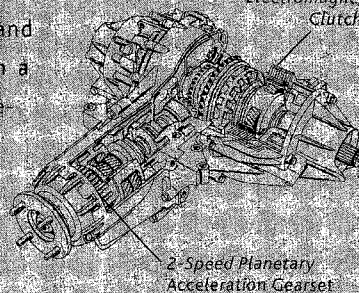
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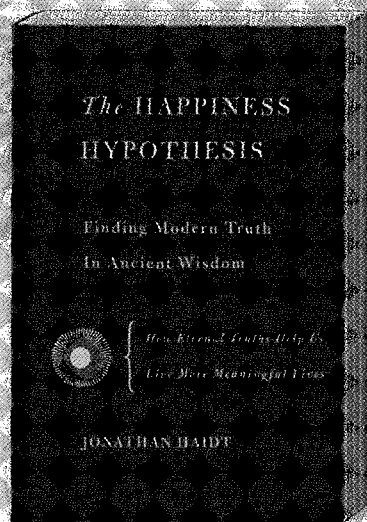
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vation movement; and a postmortem on high-rise public housing. All these inventively illuminate the historical circumstances in which the city's architecture was realized. Indeed, the new urban and architectural history is often at its best when it precisely elucidates how such non-aesthetes as bankers, businessmen, and real-estate developers influence both individual structures and the look of cities. But the new history is predictably at its worst when it's tempted down the primrose path of theory and raceclassgender-sexualorientation. The results are the sort of silly, jargon-clotted, and opaque restatements of the more or less obvious that make the professoriat look just ridiculous—and the worst is too amply on display here.

Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City, by *Tristram Hunt* (Metropolitan Books).

This, on the other hand, is among the best—among the most ambitious, sweeping, original, and significant—books of urban history to be published in the past decade. Hunt, one of those young, audacious, and brilliant British historians who write with sureness and verve, has taken on a huge subject: the Victorians' response—political, architectural, religious, and intellectual—to the rise of the modern industrial city. The political, social, moral, public-health, and infrastructure problems created by the chaotic and fetid cities of the Industrial Revolution were unprecedented and, at first, overwhelming (life expectancy in the slums of Glasgow and Liverpool in the 1840s dropped to levels unseen since the Black Death). In defining the conditions the early Victorians confronted, Hunt turns at first to the usual sources—Carlyle and Elizabeth Gaskell, Engels and Mayhew—and his survey is fluent if rather predictable. But then he boldly illuminates how the industrialized city and the problems it engendered came largely to dominate and define Victorian literature, philosophy, aesthetics, and, above all, politics and architecture. Hunt ranges with authority from Southey's anti-industrial diatribes to Glasgow's waterworks to

Ruskin's influence on civic architecture in the Midlands. He fully hits his stride, though, when he explicates the extraordinarily effective measures that the conscientious, evangelical, middle-class municipal leadership took in the second half of the nineteenth century to subdue dangerous and unlovely cities and transform them into clean, well-lit, well-governed, culturally confident metropolises. (One of his most perspicacious insights is to trace the direct line between the burghers' ideal of civic virtue and the development of municipal socialism.) Hunt's is above all a tale of merchant princes in Manchester and Liverpool, in Glasgow, Leeds, and Birmingham (that city's mayor, Joseph Chamberlain, is the dominant personality in the book), who built not only roads and sewers but galleries, libraries, and some of the greatest edifices and public spaces of nineteenth-century urban civilization—Bradford's Venetian Gothic Wool Exchange; Liverpool's Albert Dock and St. George's Hall (which the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner praised as among the greatest neo-Grecian buildings in the world); Birmingham's broad boulevards, stately squares, and grand domed council house; and Manchester's palazzo-inspired warehouses and magnificent neo-Gothic town hall. Hunt evokes a time of intense public-spiritedness, upright municipal leadership, and a strong and locally rooted civic culture (which was, as he notes, "more often than not the indigenous product of a Nonconformist conscience") that thrived before a mobile national elite absorbed it. Although he recognizes that the clock can't be turned back, he has clearly written a paean to the provincial bourgeoisie. Formerly much maligned, that group has recently received sympathetic treatment in two other histories of equal discernment but narrower scope: Simon Gunn's *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, and *Public Lives*, an affectionate portrait of middle-class Glasgow families, by Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.

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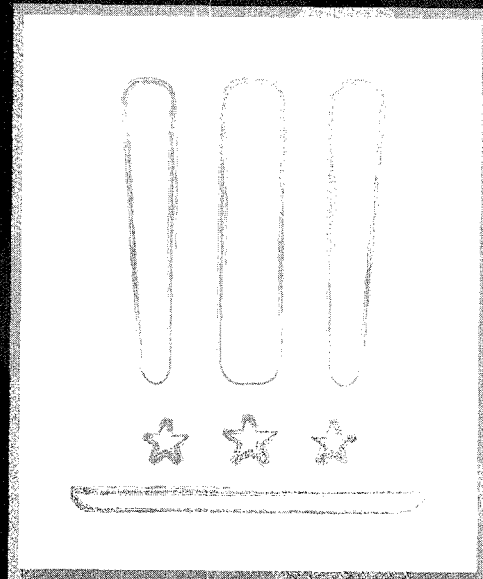
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BOOKS

Are You There God? It's Me, Monica

How nice girls got so casual about oral sex

BY CAITLIN FLANAGAN

The first time I heard a mother of girls talk about the teenage oral-sex craze, I made her cry. The story she told me—about a bar mitzvah dinner dance on the North Shore of Chicago, where the girls serviced all the boys on the chartered bus from the temple to the reception hall—was so preposterous that I burst out laughing. The thought of thirteen-year-old girls in party dresses performing a sex act once considered the province of prostitutes (we are talking here about the on-your-knees variety given to a series of near strangers) was so ludicrous that all I could do was giggle.

It was as though I had taken lightly the news that a pedophile had moved into my friend's neighborhood. It was as though I had laughed about a leukemia cluster or a lethal stretch of freeway. I apologized profusely; I told her I hadn't known.

The moms in my set are convinced—they're certain; they know for a *fact*—that all over the city, in the very best schools, in the nicest families, in the leafiest neighborhoods, twelve- and thirteen-year-old girls are performing oral sex on as many boys as they can. They're ducking into janitors' closets between classes to do it; they're doing it on school buses, and in bathrooms, libraries, and stairwells. They're making bar mitzvah presents of the act, and performing it at "train parties": boys lined up on one side of the room, girls working their way down the row. The circle jerk of old—shivering Boy Scouts huddled together in the forest primeval, desperately trying to spank out the first few drops of their own manhood—has apparently moved indoors, and now (death knell of the Eagle Scout?) there's a bevy of willing girls to do the work.



When I first began hearing these stories, I was convinced that we were in the grips of a nationwide urban legend, and the prevalence of stories centered on bar mitzvahs seemed to me suspicious, possibly even anti-Semitic in origin. But sure enough, in 2003 a feminist Jewish quarterly called *Lilith* addressed the story—not to debunk it but to come to terms with it as a recognized problem within the Jewish community: "No one is suggesting, even for a moment, that Jewish teens are leading the oral sex revolution. But they may have earlier and more frequent opportunities for sexual contact in a supercharged social milieu than their non-Jewish peers." The authors observe that the oral sex is "almost always unilateral (girls on boys)."

In talking with people, I found only one verifiable account of a girl servicing more than one boy at a party. But the army of school administrators and teachers and parents and girls I spoke with convincingly reported an astonishing change in the sexual behavior of middle- and upper-middle-class girls. Fellatio, which was once a part of the sexual repertoire only of experienced women, is now commonly performed by very young girls outside of romantic

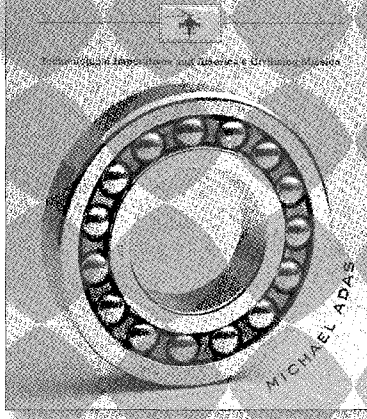
relationships, casually and without any expectation of reciprocation. It used to be that a hopeful recipient of fellatio had a lot of talking to do—to persuade, and very often to instruct, his partner. (*The Sensuous Woman*, published in 1969, was shocking for a number of reasons, but most of all because it gave to its audience of middle-class woman explicit instructions on how to perform oral sex. "Now don't turn up your nose and make that ugly face!" says the anonymous author, "J." Oral sex is the "preferred way with many movie stars, artists, titled Europeans and jet setters.")

Nowadays girls don't consider oral sex in the least exotic—nor do they even consider it to be sex. It's just "something to do." A friend who attended a leadership conference for girls from some of the country's top schools told me, "Friendships haven't changed a bit since our day. But sex has changed a *lot*." One of the teachers, from an eastern boarding school, told the students that when she was young, in the 1960s, oral sex was considered far more intimate than intercourse. The kids hooted at the notion. "It's like licking a lollipop," one pretty girl from a prestigious girls' school said, flipping her hair in the ancient gesture of teenage certainty. "It's no big deal."

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Somehow these girls have developed the indifferent attitude toward performing oral sex that one would associate with bitter, long-married women or streetwalkers. But they think of themselves as normal teenagers, version 2005. For a while, whenever I passed groups of young girls, I looked at them anew. Were these nice kids—the ones playing AYSO soccer and doing their homework and shopping with their moms—behaving like little whores whenever they got the chance? It was like some weird search for communists—was the sweet, well-spoken daughter of a friend actually a blowjobber? I looked at the small girls in my children's schoolyard—as cosseted and protected and beloved a group of children as you will find anywhere on the planet—and tried to convince myself that in a matter of five or six years they would be performing oral sex on virtual strangers.

It was crazy! It simply couldn't be true.

Last spring there were glimmers of hope. Ruth Padawer, a senior writer for *The* (Bergen, New Jersey) *Record*, wrote an editorial that was widely syndicated because of its balm of good news. Apparently there was word around town that eighth-graders were having oral sex behind the dugout during recess. (One thing to note about the oral-sex panic is the insistently wholesome locations in which the sex is said to occur.) But readers should dismiss the gossip: "According to several well-respected national surveys, the chatter apparently far surpasses action among young adolescents." A month later David Brooks wrote a very reasonable *New York Times* editorial about teen sex, called "Public Hedonism and Private Restraint," in which he said, "Reports of an epidemic of teenage oral sex are ... greatly exaggerated. There's very little evidence to suggest it is really happening."

However, the axe came down in September. A huge report was issued by the National Center for Health Statistics. It covered the topic of teenage

oral sex more extensively than any previous study, and the news was devastating: A quarter of girls aged fifteen had engaged in it, and more than half aged seventeen. Obviously, there was no previous data to compare this with, but millions of suburban dads were quite adamant that they had been born too soon.

The moms were traumatized anew. "It's like there's a bogeyman in the next room, and we keep praying for him to go away," a friend who has a seventh-grade daughter told me. "But he won't."

The conviction that nice girls are engaging in no-strings-attached, semi-anonymous fellatio is based on a genuine and puzzling change in teen sexual behavior. It is manifested in a group hysteria in which terrified adults have projected onto their children superhuman sexual capabilities and technical prowess. And it is reflective of the fact that the dominant culture in this country—one forged by the apparently opposed forces of male sexual desire and female empowerment—has abandoned girls in every possible respect. These three factors worked their way into literature this summer with a book that historians may someday regard as the single biggest clue to the cultural anxieties surrounding the

THE RAINBOW PARTY

by Paul Ruditis
Simon Pulse

FOREVER

by Judy Blume
Pocket Books

ARE YOU THERE GOD? IT'S ME, MARGARET

by Judy Blume
Bradbury Press

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American teenage girl circa 2005: *The Rainbow Party*, by Paul Ruditis.

The *Rainbow Party*, an offering from Simon Pulse, a young-adult division of Simon & Schuster, takes place on a single day, in which a tough little sophomore named Gin issues invitations to a party at which she and five of her friends will perform oral sex on the lucky guests, a group of popular boys. The girls will each wear a different color of lipstick, so that when a boy has completed the circuit, his penis will bear the colors of the rainbow. The party is to take place after school, to last about an hour and a half—including time for chitchat—and to conclude before Gin's father returns home from work.

In addition to the predictable, outraged criticism that this vile book has received, there is a question of veracity: as many readers have noted, wouldn't the different colors of lipstick smear together, destroying the desired rainbow effect? Not once, however, has another question been posed: How many boys could successfully receive seven blowjobs in an hour? Surely even the adolescent male at the peak of his sexual prime needs at least a few minutes to reload. One would assume that the first transaction would be completed at light speed, that the second might take a bit longer—and that by the fourth or fifth even the horniest tenth-grader might display some real staying power. But asking questions like these will automatically preclude you from entering the current oral-sex hysteria, which presupposes not only that a limitless number of young American girls have taken on the sexual practices of porn queens but also that American boys are capable of having an infinite number of sexual experiences in rapid succession. It requires believing that a boy could be serviced at the school-bus train party—receiving oral sex from ten or fifteen girls, one after another—and then zip his fly and head off to home-room, first stopping in the stairwell for a quickie to tide him over until math.

The Rainbow Party has the feeling of true pornography. In particular, it has the feeling of homosexual-male pornography. The school is called Harding High, and the prose takes a quickening, vivid leap forward when two boys, Hunter and Perry, duck into the school bathroom, where Perry services his pal and then wonders if they might be gay. Otherwise the book is inert, obscene without being erotic, its slim narrative structure insufficient for the gimmickry of its premise. The party is eventually undermined by a series of debacles, leaving Gin and her pal Sandy alone to service the crowd—and then the boys can't even be bothered to show up. This is clearly a high school humiliation of an entirely new and apocalyptic order. What if you gave a blowjob party but nobody came? Injury to insult, Gin gets the clap, victim and catalyst of a school-wide gonorrhea outbreak.

READING LIST

MOMMIES DEAREST

Top literary reasons why it sucks to have chic parents

BY SALLY SINGER

1. They resent your glamour ...

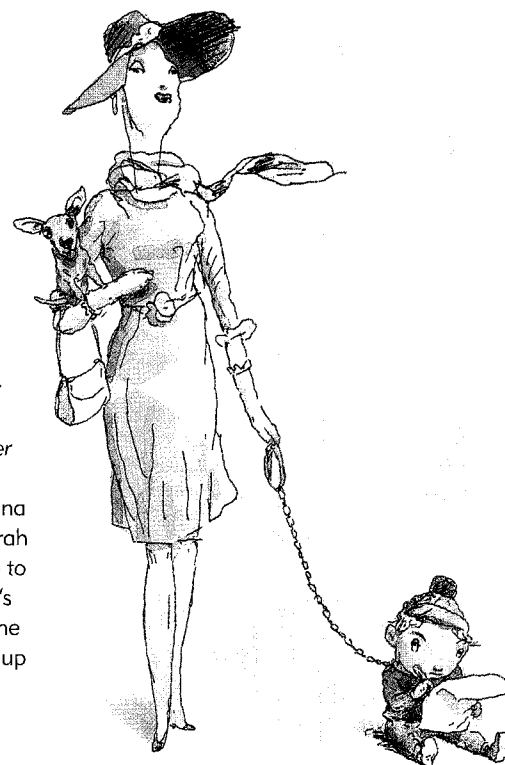
and so, if they are named Ryan O'Neal, they boycott the Oscars on the night of your historic win, sleep with your older best friend on a family vacation, and practice their boxing moves on you. Tatum O'Neal's *A Paper Life* is a ridiculously convincing indictment of her parents (O'Neal and Joanna Moore) and her father's girlfriend (Farrah Fawcett) as the people least equipped to raise children ever, even by Hollywood's limbo-bar standards. Until, perhaps, the disastrous Tatum herself, who shoots up with the little McEnroes in the house.

2. They skip your birthday party ...

and, indeed, every other significant event of your girlhood (see O'Neal, Tatum, 1974 Oscars) if, like Lois Gould's mother, Jo Copeland, they are too busy making frocks for other fabulous New Yorkers. Gould's detailed account of her mother's rise to prominence on Seventh Avenue—*Mommy Dressing: A Love Story, After a Fashion*—is peppered with lethal mother-daughter moments, sixty years on: "'Don't perspire in this dress,' she warned me. 'I never perspire. Why must you?'"

3. They force you to model in mother-daughter fashion shows ...

even if you, aged seven or eight and named Virginia Ironside, feel "resentful and miserable and as suitably dressed as a chimpanzee at a tea party." *Janey and Me: Growing Up With My Mother* is a deliciously vicious account of being raised in a bohemian London family in the postwar era. Virginia's mother, Janey Ironside, was a professor of fashion at the Royal College of Art who championed a new generation of British talent (including Bill Gibb, Ossie Clark, and Sally Tuffin) that provided the look for Carnaby Street and much of the musical grooviness that followed. But Mom was also drunk, unfaithful to Dad, and prone to making her daughter wear pathbreaking sack dresses to school in 1957, when everyone else was in pinafores. We learn from this book the lesson that fashion directionality is, perhaps, the worst parental offense.



4. They make you summer in Beverly Hills, winter in New York ...

and hope that, aged fourteen, you don't get lost switching trains and stations in Chicago. In *Coast to Coast: A Family Romance*, Nora Johnson, child of the Hollywood great Nunnally Johnson and the New York social diva Marion Johnson, describes a life spent shuttling between extremes (of wealth, privilege, residential space, attentiveness) and counts the psychic costs of perpetual motion. Johnson is the author of *The World of Henry Orient*; for fans of that book and film, this is Val's story.

5. They are more fabulous than you could ever be ...

Francine du Plessix Gray's mother, Tatiana, and her stepfather, Alexander Liberman, were simply the most visually gifted, stylish, and (almost justifiably, given their talents) self-absorbed parents in the universe. Their daughter's memoir, *Them: A Memoir of Parents* (has there ever been a more sinister title?), captures the peculiar doom of being supplanted in the parental heart by magazines and fashions and everything that glitters. Although children may be gold, they do not always shine (unless they win an Oscar: see O'Neal, Tatum).

Next month, reasons 6 through 10 ...

Sally Singer is the fashion-news and features director at *Vogue*.

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The book's sole effective literary technique is achieved unintentionally: *The Rainbow Party* is so leaden and formulaic, so completely deadened to any of the possibilities of fiction, that it mirrors the way girls are said to feel about fellatio—jaded and shockproof. (It's not just Hunter and Perry's high jinks in the restroom that put one in mind of bathhouse culture. Almost everything about the current blowjob craze—the randomness of the sexual encounters; the fact that they're apparently devoid of meaning beyond the immediate gratification of male desire, that neither party is inclined to say "no," that little consideration is given to female desire, or even female anatomy—suggests a strain of gay male sex more than it does traditional male-female relationships.) It is hard to imagine that a person could read a novel like that and feel genuine emotion of any kind. In this way it is the exact opposite of the novel that was for me, and many of my high school friends, the most powerful book of our young lives. Not since *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has a single novel by an American woman prompted so many readers into such radical action. I speak, of course, about Judy Blume's *Forever*.

Judy Blume, who has sold more than 75 million books, been awarded the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, and been called one of the most banned writers in America, began writing for children in the 1960s. She married young, established housekeeping in suburban New Jersey, and promptly had two children. She loved the kids but loathed the housewifery, and as a creative outlet took a class in children's literature.

Blume describes her childhood as one in which she was "dying with curiosity" about sex, but there was nowhere in the 1940s and 1950s for a nice girl to get any information. The memory of that burning curiosity led her to write a novel about a twelve-year-old waiting to get her period, *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. Before the publication of this seminal work, a bookish girl interested in the emotions and practicalities surrounding menstruation would be nudged by a

sympathetic teacher toward the diary of Anne Frank, which sure enough addresses the subject with candor, but the general mood of the book—what with the Holocaust and all—did not generate much enthusiasm for the men-
ses. The dearest book of my childhood, Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, includes Francie's first period, but again, the novel's no upper: shortly after first blood Francie is assaulted by a pervert in a tenement hallway. I was in seventh grade when *The Exorcist* was released. No one my age was allowed anywhere near it, but we were well versed in the plot (the implications of which were clear, if unspoken, to all of my friends): a prepubescent girl—a girl our age, on the cusp of the same event we were—was overtaken body and soul not by the Kotex cartel but by the devil himself. At twelve I knew a few basic facts about menstruation—it somehow involved babies and shedding a lining

The boys can't even be bothered to show up to the rainbow party. This is a high school humiliation of an entirely new and apocalyptic order. What if you gave a blowjob party but nobody came?

and blood everywhere—and was possessed by an unholy fear of it.

And then I went to Naomi Zimmerman's birthday party, and while the other girls slumbered through the night, I stayed up and read one of the presents, a brand-new copy of *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. By dawn I was a new girl. Here was a character on the brink of getting her first period, but she wasn't being hunted by sex fiends or Nazis or Beelzebub. She wasn't frightened by what was about to happen—she couldn't wait. And her wonderful family couldn't wait either.

Reading *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* for the first time in thirty years meant realizing anew that the world of my childhood is as distant and unrecoverable as that of the Etruscans. Margaret and I were young during a time when little girls dreamed of getting the courage to ask their mothers for training bras, attended carefully supervised dances, eagerly wore clothes that the modern preteen would sooner die than

put on. ("Should I wear my velvet?" Margaret asks her mother when she learns she's been invited to a boy-girl supper party. "It's your best," her mother replies.) In Margaret's world the boys can't be counted on to maintain a grown-up demeanor for these events: they disappoint the girls by stomping on their toes during a PTA-sponsored square dance; at the supper party they throw their sports coats in a pile and shoot mustard at the ceiling through drinking straws. But it is also the boys who are responsible for introducing the first glimmerings of sex to the group. When a boy suggests that they turn off the light and play Guess Who—"the boys line up on one side and the girls on the other and then when I yell *Go* the boys run to the girls' side and try to guess who's who by the way they feel"—the girls put on the brakes immediately. ("No, thank you," Gretchen said. "That's disgusting!") The girls agree to a game of Spin the Bottle, however, and

that night Margaret gets her first thrilling, fleeting kiss. The novel ends in triumph: three drops of blood on Margaret's underpants, discovered the day of the sixth-grade farewell party, mean that she has left childhood behind.

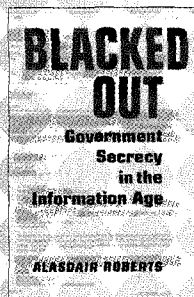
Through all of these events Margaret's parents are by her side, helping her to negotiate her excitement and her fears, congratulating her on each of the steps she makes toward womanhood. And if they give her plenty of support when she gets her first period, by the time she's ready—at age seventeen—to have her first sexual experience, they practically stand by the bed and take photographs to put in the family scrapbook. For despite the fact that the protagonist in *Forever* is named Katherine, she is really Margaret a few years older, still living in suburban New Jersey, still a good girl with good parents. *Forever* is the first mainstream novel written for American teenage girls that is not only sexually explicit but also intentionally erotic, and that gives them the exact

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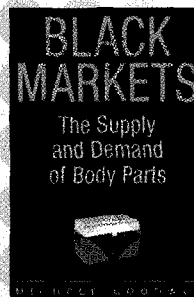
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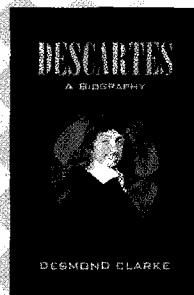
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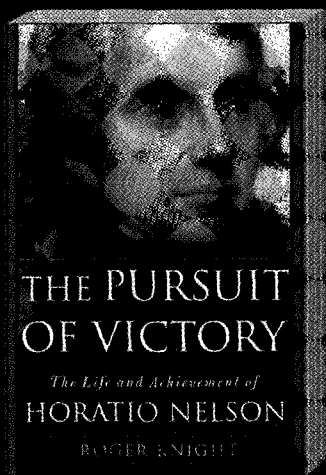
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information—practical as well as emotional—to initiate a satisfying sex life.

Again, consider what had come before. As a teenage girl in the early 1970s who was as desperately curious about sex as Judy Blume had been in the fifties, I read everything I could lay my hands on. I turned to novels for information about sex not because I'm a reader but because when I was young they were among the few places a nice girl could find any. (*Love, American Style* was risqué, but it was hardly explicit.) To my parents' dismay I read *Valley of the Dolls* more times than I could count, but Jacqueline Susann's attitude toward human sexuality was of a piece with her prose: whorish and dirty. *Goodbye, Columbus* commanded my attention, but you don't turn to Philip Roth if you want to learn how to go all the way with a really nice boyfriend.

Adults were quick to stick you with *The Bell Jar*, which you were supposed to lap up with zesty gratitude because of its racy subject matter, but I smelled a rat from the get-go. Even at sixteen I could tell that the book was overpraised, a stealth weapon of grownups eager to appear progressive in their literary suggestions for teenagers but secretly dying for you to get an eyeful of Esther's first sexual experience: recovering from a suicide attempt, on furlough from a psychiatric ward, she does the deed with an older man and almost hemorrhages to death.

The only books I'd seen that placed sex where I wanted to find it—in the middle of a committed relationship, with the boy treating the girl as if she were a fragile piece of glass, and their love so powerful that it threatened to blot them both out—were the pregnancy-scare books that had been passed from hand to hand among the girls at my Catholic junior high. Written in the 1960s, they invariably involved a supersmart girl (family: respectable, middle-class) and a really neat, ambitious boy (his people would be working-class; their great dream would be for their son to become a college boy). Always they would make a terrible mistake one night; always it would turn out to have been one shot with a bullet: dead rabbit and hell to

pay. They would grapple with the most serious kinds of decision-making, and always (this is why we devoured these books and dreamed about them) the couple ended up married at sixteen, living in garage apartments or guest-houses. Books like *Too Bad About the Haines Girl* and *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* were supposed to frighten us away from sex, lest we become tragic girls ourselves. But they were so clearly built upon a commonly accepted and deeply stirring code of male honor—an almost chivalric set of principles, handed down through the centuries, and still in practice in the American suburbs of the 1960s—that we were dazzled by them, and regarded them as the greatest love stories ever told. Which, in a sense, they were.

And then: *Forever*. If Hollywood movies of the 1930s taught my parents how to kiss, *Forever* taught me how to have sex. This was sex the way girls wanted to read about it, the way they wanted to experience it: immersed in romance. Katherine and Michael are college-bound high school seniors from nice families. Katherine's parents are so exquisitely in tune with the physical and emotional progress of her relationship that one wonders if they've planted a wire on her. The grandmother who in *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret?* sent sweaters with labels that read MADE EXPRESSLY FOR YOU ... BY GRANDMA now sends Planned Parenthood brochures with a note reading, "I don't judge, I just advise." Katherine's mother leaves a *New York Times* article about teen sex on her daughter's pillow one night, and they rap about it the next morning. "A person shouldn't ever feel pushed into sex," Katherine tells her mom. "Or that she has to do it to please someone else ..." "I'm glad you feel that way," Mom says approvingly. Was Mom, Katherine asks, a virgin when she got married? No, but she's had sex only with Dad, and she waited until they were engaged.

Where *Margaret* offered highly specific information about sanitary pads and belts, *Forever* takes us straight to the birth-control clinic, and it doesn't flinch. ("Then he slipped this cold thing into my vagina and explained,

"This is a vaginal speculum. It holds the walls of the vagina open so that the inside is easily seen. Would you like to see your cervix?"")

Armed with birth-control pills, with a code of sexual ethics that center on a girl's cautious willingness and a boy's patient and full commitment to her, and with a final health clearance (Michael admits that the previous summer he contracted VD from his only other sexual partner, but he's fine now), Katherine and Michael are off to the races. Anyone who rereads *Forever* and expects to find it much tamer than she remembers is in for a shock: "This time Michael made it last much, much longer and I got so carried away I grabbed his backside with both hands, trying to push him deeper and deeper into me—and I spread my legs as far apart as I could—and I raised my hips off the bed—and I moved with him, again and again and again—and at last I came."

The question is this: How, exactly, in the course of thirty years, did we get from Katherine to Gin? How did we go from a middle-class teenage girl (fictional but broadly accurate) who will have sex only if it's with her boyfriend, and only if her pleasure is equal to his, to a middle-class teenage girl (a gross media caricature reflective of an admittedly disturbing trend) who wants to kneel down and service a series of boys? Katherine and her mother (who still enjoys a pleasurable sex life with her husband) represent two points on a continuum. In the mother's generation sex was contained by marriage; in the daughter's it was contained by love and relationships. The next point on this progression ought to be a girl who feels that nothing save her own desire should control her choice of sexual partners. Instead we see a group of young girls who have in effect turned away from their own desire altogether and have made of their sexuality something that fulfills all sorts of goals, but not the one paramount to Katherine and her mother: that it be sexually gratifying to themselves.

Tracing the story of the writing and publication of *The Rainbow Party* requires an examination of two forces: the genuine and perplexing rise of oral

sex among teenagers—specifically of oral sex performed by young girls on boys—and the media-fueled hysteria of girls' parents, which has prompted tales of orgiastic tween encounters suggesting that every ninth-grade noodlehead is leading an erotic life worthy of the NBA all-stars. The story does not begin with a million moms opening their coat closets as one, only to watch in horror as their pre-teen daughters tumble out alongside tumescent chums from chess club. It begins—is nowhere safe?—with PBS. In 1999 the network broadcast an episode of *Frontline* that became legendary. Called "The Lost Children of Rockdale County," it centered on a teen syphilis outbreak in Conyers, Georgia, an exurb of Atlanta where vast acres of farmland have been converted into subdivisions of large, handsome houses, and where the three local high schools, flush with tax dollars, are among the best in the state. The show became a sensation, was repeatedly rebroadcast, and was featured on *Oprah*, where it was called a "must see for all parents."

"The Lost Children of Rockdale County" is a bizarre program that takes isolated teen depravity, anxious adult voyeurism, and an ever important dash of venereal disease and blends them into a vividly yellow piece of public-service journalism—one that typically exaggerates the what, and in so doing just as typically overlooks the why behind a less sensational but far more pervasive concern. The tale is told largely by middle-aged women who are at turns clinically matter-of-fact about and pruriently fascinated by what happened in Conyers. A small group of white girls from stupendously troubled families (the kids are described as "cherubic" for maximum effect) began meeting in one of the girls' houses after school—and sometimes in a motel room—to do drugs and service two groups of rough trade, one of local white boys, the other of African-American boys (a recent prison inmate among them) who commuted from a different part of the county to avail themselves of the girls. Oral sex wasn't the half of it—what these kids allegedly engaged in combined the degeneracy of a satanic cult with the agility of a Cirque du Soleil troupe. We are told that a common after-school activ-

NEW FICTION

Finds and flops

BY JOSEPH O'NEILL

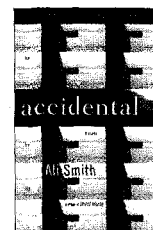


The ordinarily attentive reader can be forgiven for having lost Ali Smith in the fireworks of publicity accorded her near-homonymous compatriots Monica Ali and Zadie Smith. But now, with the publication of (Ali) Smith's bewitching third novel (which, like her second, *Hotel World*, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize), there can be no mistaking her talent for anyone else's—and theirs, at the risk of being invidious, may often seem squiblike by comparison with what's on offer in these persistently sparkling pages.

The central idea of *The Accidental* is a familiar one (familiar, certainly, to anyone recalling Pasolini's *Theorem*, starring Terence Stamp, whose name appears on the book's first page): family succumbs to magical charms of irresistible stranger and is forever changed. Thus the Smarts, a foursome washed up in a miserable Norfolk summer rental and, more especially, on separate islets of middle-class unhappiness, by accident take into their midst Amber, or Alhambra—a peculiarly beautiful thirtysomething vagabond, supernatural in her perceptiveness and psychosexual prowess, who acts as an "exotic fixative" for philandering dad, self-trapping mom, and fucked-up kids. By summer's end the family Smart, though of course not finally cured of its difficulties, is at least no longer marooned in them; a fable of escape and renewal has been miraculously enacted.

The real story, though, is the language. In a narrative that alternates between the characters' viewpoints—twelve-year-old Astrid, a kind of junior Lydia Davis, is a particularly wonderful voice—Smith maintains a playful, poetic idiom of startling and clarifying emotional power, so that the prose, in its logical beauty and its surprisingness, serves as an analogue of the enchantment dispensed by Amber. It's an enormous technical accomplishment that reminds us of the difference between linguistic hocus-pocus and real writing; more important, it casts a spell.

Joseph O'Neill is a novelist whose most recent book is *Blood-Dark Track: A Family History*.



THE
ACCIDENTAL
by Ali Smith
Pantheon

ity in Conyers was "the sandwich," in which a girl would be simultaneously penetrated by as many as four boys (the fourth, apparently a Johnny-come-lately, would somehow shoehorn himself into an orifice already occupied by one of his pals). With the kids in Conyers exploiting virtually every known opening for sexual transmission, an outbreak was not unlikely. It spread to seventeen kids, who were treated and who recovered fully.

But the show also contains interviews with kids who had nothing to do with this horrifying and aberrant episode, kids who seem adrift in the increasingly isolating family culture that was being born in the nineties. They speak of family members who have televisions in their own rooms, who never eat dinner together, who live with one another in the sepulchral McMansions of Conyers the way people live together in hotels: nodding politely as they pass on the stairs, aware of one another's schedules and routines but only in a vague, indifferent manner. These are kids—girls especially—who have developed a dull, curiously passionless relationship to their own sexuality, which they give of freely. The girls seem sad that their easily granted sexual favors (including oral sex) have not earned them boy-friends, and completely unaware of how they could have negotiated the transactions differently.

The producers ingeniously and dishonorably encourage the viewer to meld these two different stories together, that of the diseased, freaky girls and their multi-pronged campaign of self-destruction, and that of the sad, sexually precocious normal kids—in short, to link the activities of the latter with the outcomes of the former. And thus the oral-sex hysteria was officially born. The belief that casual oral sex in a middle-class school community was an invitation to a teenage public-health threat of epidemic proportions gave the media license to talk about it endlessly and in the most graphic terms imaginable—following the silence = death formulation created during the height of the American AIDS crisis, which encouraged frank public sexual discourse in the hope of saving lives. It's a no-miss formula: descriptions of young girls performing

oral sex that are so luridly specific as to seem pedophilic in the adults' retelling, coupled with stern warnings to parents that their daughters are in harm's way. All of which misses a less alarming but more poignant fact. What's most worrisome about this age of blasé blowjobs isn't what the girls might catch (one can contract an STD through oral sex alone; however, the risk is lower than for most other forms of sexual transmission), it's what the girls are almost certainly losing: a healthy emotional connection to their own sexuality and their own desire. In this context all the unflinching medico-sexual naughty talk is but a cowardly evasion of a more insidious problem—one resistant to penicillin.

Four months after the *Frontline* documentary aired, *Talk* magazine published an essay called "The Sex Lives of Your Children." Its author, Lucinda Franks, described an upper-middle-class white world in which oral sex began at

ugly and fraught was underscored when Dr. Phil decided to confront a young blowjobber about the error of her ways. She was sitting in the front row next to her mother, who was apparently hoping that public humiliation on a global scale might reform her daughter.

Dr. Phil, who has the vast, impenetrable physique of a pachyderm and the calculated folksiness of a country-music promoter, employs a psychotherapeutic cloak of respectability to legitimize his many prurient obsessions. "When you're saying 'It's just friends,' let me tell you," he raged at the poor girl, "a friend doesn't ask you to go in the bathroom, get on your knees in a urine-splattered tile floor, and stick their penis in your mouth. That's not what I call a friend." (Poor Howard Stern has spent years alternately outraged and heartbroken about the FCC's refusal to sanction women's talk shows the way it does his morning show, and episodes like this

Sex ed in the 1970s was a little like driver's ed: a grimly delivered set of facts, copiously illustrated with hideous examples of what could go wrong if you were foolhardy enough to operate the machinery.

age twelve, and said—in perhaps the first published use of the term—that train parties abounded. For the sake of journalistic accuracy she reported a twelve-year-old girl's description of the taste of sperm, and during an NPR radio interview about her essay she referred to the Conyers incident in the wildly inaccurate way in which the episode had quickly passed into the national consciousness: in Rockdale County, Georgia, "a whole town—the kids came down with syphilis."

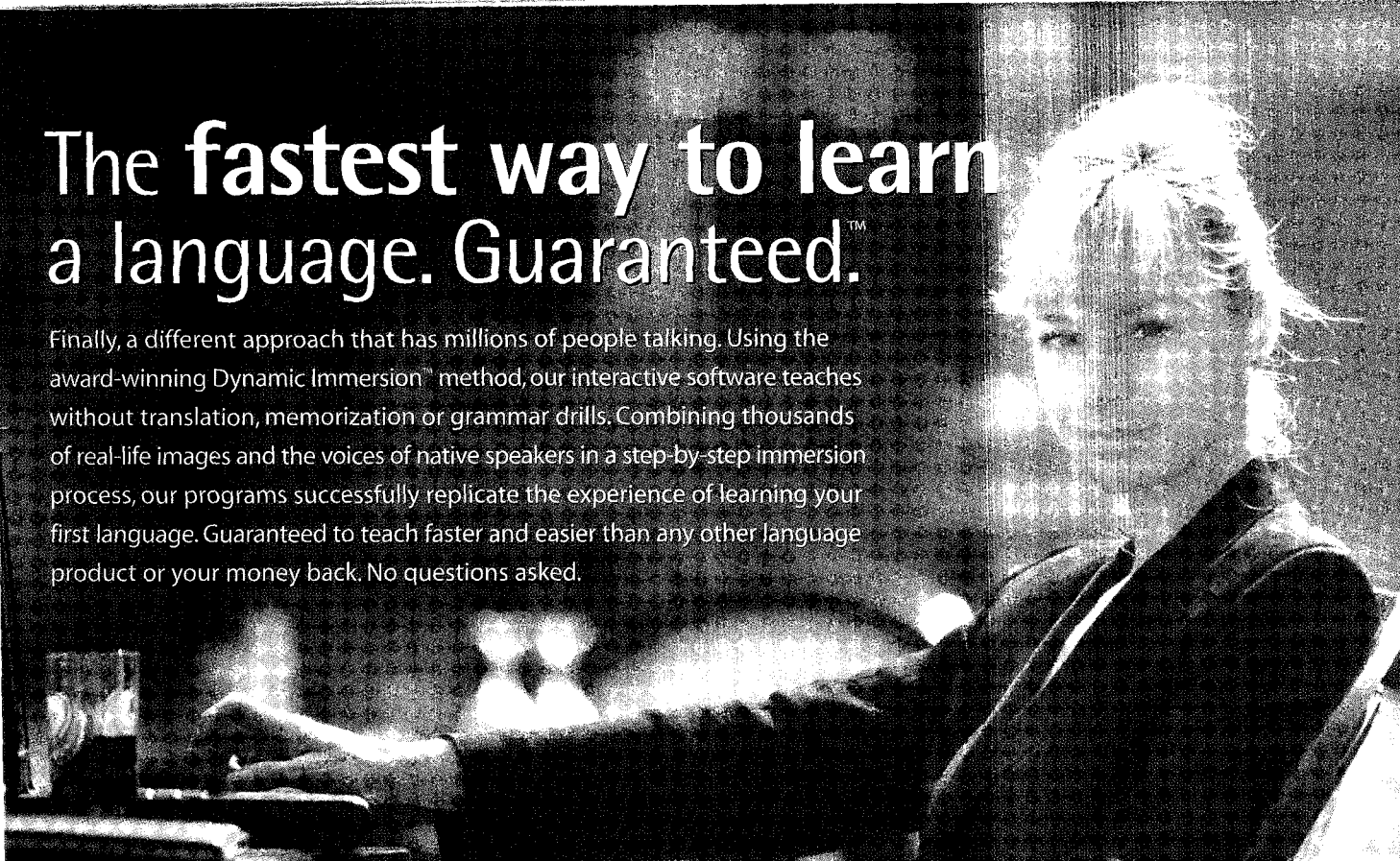
Two years later Oprah invited Dr. Phil to her television show to address the topic. "There's an oral-sex epidemic," Oprah told the audience point-blank. Teary mothers related their horrifying stories: "A year or two ago she was playing with Barbies and collecting Beanie Babies. And then now all of a sudden she's into casual oral sex!" Wide-eyed young girls spilled the beans on their slutty classmates, and intimated that they themselves weren't so different. That the entire subject is

make you realize he has a point.)

As the audience roared its approval (whether for chastity or obscenity was unclear), the girl looked stricken and angry. "That's not what happened to me," she whispered audibly to her mother, who whispered back, "Tell him." But the girl was understandably cowed by the specter of Dr. Phil on one of his verbal stampedes, and she said nothing, leaving him clueless about a major aspect of the oral-sex craze. No boy had forced the girl anywhere. In all likelihood she herself had been the initiator, the location scout, the one who had decided that this was indeed an activity that could take place between two "friends." (The oral-sex hysteria has attributed to American boys not only superhuman virility but also wanton emotional cruelty. The one is laughable; the other in the main is just not the case. Like the medical dodge, the demonization of boys oversimplifies the problem and spares one the arguably sadder truth.)

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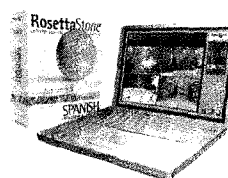
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OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS.
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In 2003 Oprah addressed the topic again: in an article in *O* magazine that she also featured on her television show. "Parents, brace yourselves," Oprah said. Teenagers are leading "double lives"—and we all need to get hip to the code words they use. The journalist who wrote the article got right to the point: A "tossed salad," for example, was "oral sex to the anus." A "dirty" girl was a diseased one. And a "rainbow party" was a blowjob party where the girls wore different-colored lipstick.

Apparently taking a break from her toil in the vineyard of belles lettres—relaxing, in fact, by watching *Oprah*—was Bethany Buck, a Simon & Schuster editrix who smelled a winner. She contacted Ruditis (one of whose previous books was *The Brady Bunch Guide to Life*); they created characters and an outline; and he was sent off to type the thing up.

The oral-sex craze—and in particular girls' insistence that blowjobs "aren't sex"—has often been blamed on Bill Clinton and his semantic calisthenics during the Kenneth Starr investigation. But even if teen girls were looking to the White House for personal guidance, was it really Bubba they were trying to emulate? Girls' private lives are always much more influenced by First Daughters, or even First Ladies, than they are by any pasty politico. Furthermore, and more damning to the blame-Clinton argument, the events chronicled in "The Lost Children of Rockdale County" occurred two years before it was revealed that Monica Lewinsky (hardly an aspirational figure to the young girls of America, who wanted neither to fellate middle-aged men nor to wear beastly Gap suit-dresses) had flashed her XXL thong at him and got out her "presidential kneepads." And anyway, what culture had Monica emerged from that she was eager merely to give the great man a blowjob—that her highest sexual ambition was not to become his Mrs. Bo Jo Jones but simply (read the federally funded Starr report, if you must) to have him ejaculate in her mouth? Indeed, to hear Monica tell it, the meanest thing Bill did to her wasn't

to refuse her phone calls and give her a dorky book of poems. No, in Monica's world Bill was a big creep because at the critical moment he withdrew the presidential organ and jacked off over the sink—a sexual decision that might once have been considered sort of thoughtful (remember the three biggest lies, anyone?) but in the new order is somehow a mark of disrespect.

Blowjob nation has also been blamed on "abstinence only" sex-education programs. In this line of thinking the evil Republicans have made such a fetish of the intact hymen that teenagers—parsing the term "sexual abstinence" with Jesuitical precision—have decided to substitute oral sex for intercourse, thereby preserving their technical virginity. I'm no fan of these programs. In light of advances in birth control and the economic advisability of delaying marriage until after the college years, sexual purity seems a goal best advanced by those religions that advocate it, not by our public schools. But even if "abstinence" is at stake, why would girls voluntarily turn to giving blowjobs? Whatever happened to the hand job? Whither the dry hump? Why do girls prefer the far more debasing, uncomfortable, and messy blowjob? And why are they apparently giving them out so indiscriminately? These are questions that none of the usual suspects can answer.

Wherever there's a girl gone wild, there's a gender-studies professor not far behind, eager to blame her actions on the patriarchy. One of these is NYU's Julian Carter, who says that oral sex among young teen girls is part of a complex power dynamic, one that is familiar to people who know how Carol Gilligan's influential book *In a Different Voice* has dominated feminist thinking. Says Carter: "It's precisely at this age of early adolescence that ... girls' sense of self-worth changes dramatically ... this is when they are finding out they have less power within a patriarchal system ..." According to Carter's theory, the girls are apparently suffering from a severe form of Stockholm syndrome, and have reacted by performing oral sex on their wily captors.

The problem with this idea is that surely the patriarchy was far stronger

and more oppressive in the 1950s. But you don't find Betty—or even Veronica—cravenly servicing Archie and Jughead. Indeed, during the very years that the patriarchy has been most seriously eroded, we have seen a cult of mortification of the flesh take root among teenage girls. The anorexia and bulimia that swept the teen population in the eighties, the “cutting” fad of the nineties, and now this strange new preference for unreciprocated oral sex all evolved as the patriarchy was being crippled, as new and untested roles were being offered to the country's girls.

One might expect that Planned Parenthood would have nothing to say on this subject; oral sex may have many risks, but parenthood isn't one of them. When I recently logged on, I learned a lot. The organization—which receives 32 percent of its funding from the federal government—had on its home page a lengthy descrip-

tion of oral sex. “Oral sex is something that people can only enjoy giving oral sex when they are being stimulated at the same time. And some people [frigid cranky Mormons? Laura Bush? Total losers?] do not enjoy providing or receiving oral sex at all.”

Parents could click on a helpful report from Rutgers University's “Oral Sex Lady,” Nora Gelperin. She digs her job, which involves providing teenagers with information about oral sex, an activity for which she's sort of a booster. She does offer some tips for those who want to curb the oral-sex trend: they should have bull sessions with groups of kids to “illuminate the variety of teens' opinions about oral sex,” in order to “more accurately reflect the range of opinions instead of continuing to propagate the stereotype that ‘all teens are having oral sex.’” In other words, instead of the adult instructing kids in what is right and wrong and telling them what is expected of them,

The “it takes a village” philosophy is a joke, because the village is now so desolate of commonly held moral values that my job as a mother is not to rely on the village but to protect my children from it.

tion of Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito's “Strategy to Gut Roe,” but I quickly drilled past that, straight down to the Teen Wire department, where the “experts” have helpfully answered all sorts of teen questions, from “Can I lose my virginity if my boyfriend fingers me?” to whether the insertion of “objects” during masturbation is recommended. (The experts said it was all in good fun, but as a nervous mom I couldn't help wondering what kind of objects.) Leaving behind reproductive matters entirely, the site also indulged in unabashed sexual advocacy, offering a 411 on oral sex. For example: “Oral sex—using one's mouth on a partner's sex organs—feels good to many people. There's nothing wrong or nasty about having oral sex whether a person is receiving or giving it. Both girls and guys may want to perform oral sex on their partners because they enjoy giving it.” And “Some people enjoy giving oral sex whether or not they are being stimulated at the same time. Some peo-

ple can only enjoy giving oral sex when they are being stimulated at the same time. And some people [frigid cranky Mormons? Laura Bush? Total losers?] do not enjoy providing or receiving oral sex at all.”

the kids themselves should seek direction from each other. A mother concerned that her daughter has turned to performing oral sex on strangers at age twelve should bear this in mind: “We must not forget that the desire of early adolescents to feel sexual pleasure is normal and natural and should be celebrated, not censored.” (DAD: Geez I had a rough day at the office. MOM: Put it out of your mind, honey. Trudy just told me that we have something very special to celebrate!)

For me, the most shocking moment in “The Lost Children of Rockdale County”—more shocking even than “the sandwich”—involves three giggly blonde best friends forever who give an extensive, girly interview while sitting in one of their bedrooms, surrounded by stuffed animals. At a certain point one of the producers asks them what kind of music they like, and they all squeal, “Rap!” “Give me an example,” the coaxing producer says to them. The

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girls decide to sing for her, and their sweet, piping voices flow easily over the lyrics, which they all know by heart—three teenyboppers sitting in a suburban bedroom, singing their favorite song, "Love in Ya Mouth":

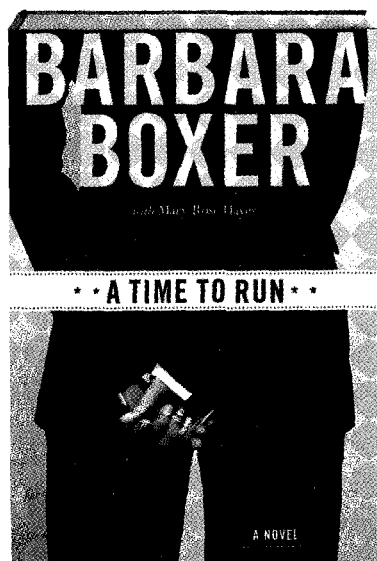
I take 3 little bitches and I put 'em
in a line
I take 4, 5, 6 and blow 'dem hos
mind
It'll take 1 more before I go for
mine
7 bitches get fucked at the same
time
She eats me, sun she, she can suck
a ding dong
All day all night all evenin long
She said she neva done it, she said
she neva tried
Shes sittin there tellin a motha-
fuckin lie
Now, how many licks does it take to
make my dick split
Well, not many licks if the bitch is
a good trick
Now, any nigga can talk to a bitch
and get the bitch to fuck
But how many niggaz can talk to a
bitch and get they dick sucked
Like me a pimp that you neva saw
Now how do you say "manger et
trois" [uh, sic]

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One of the most astonishing things to happen during the 1990s was that rap music that included some of the most violent, sexually explicit, and misogynistic lyrics ever recorded slipped seamlessly and virtually unnoticed into the households of so many apparently responsible American families. Boomer parents, remembering their own struggles with their square parents over rock-and-roll, were lenient about their kids' music. Tipper Gore's heroic campaign to get explicit music rated and labeled was born after she decided to do something few parents had even attempted: actually listen to the albums her kids had bought. She was ridiculed by many factions, including those forces on the American left who cry censorship whenever anyone attempts to protect the public, including children, from smut (and in the case of rap, smut emanating from a source the left valorizes: black urban America). In the summer of 2004 Bill Cosby brought down a hail of criticism when he lambasted the hip-hop culture as a shameful squandering of the civil-

rights gains that his generation had fought for and won.

But the protests of white senators' wives and African-American senior citizens have not had much effect on music sales, and have not prevented a large number of poor and middle-class kids alike from becoming saturated by the world of spoken-word, hard-core pornography that is rap music. Add to this the countless other products of our increasingly sexualized teen culture, in which male sexual fantasy of the type once reserved for prison-yard posturing has been adopted and championed by very young girls who stand only to be brutalized by it—emotionally, if not physically.

Ironically, many of the objectives stated in rap lyrics are the same as those of contemporary American feminism: to encourage girls not to be shackled by the double standard and to abandon modesty as a goal, to erode patriarchal notions of how men ought to treat women, and to champion aggressiveness in girls. It was very possible for a girl in the nineties to have her well-intentioned parents buy her a CD in which she was urged to suck dick and get fucked, and to have a well-intentioned teacher (I was one such) tell her to be as intellectually and verbally aggressive as she could—that aggression for its own sake was a good thing, because it leveled the playing field in a male-dominated world.

At the same time, actual pornography—once the province of the most marginalized and criminally suspect performers and businessmen; once a slice of illicit commerce entirely beyond the purview of decent society—was entering the mainstream. It became possible to find porn star Jenna Jameson discussing her trade with the likes of Anderson Cooper on CNN. It was possible, furthermore, to discover that she was being interviewed not as a fallen woman but as a successful businessperson. Simultaneously, feminists were turning themselves into pretzels trying to get together a coherent policy on pornography. Obviously it was exploitative—unless it wasn't. Because if it was explicit sexual material made for the arousal of women, then it was somehow ... empowering? And how to deal with the Jenna Jamesons of the world,

who were proving themselves to be feminist powerhouses, keeping the government out of private decisions about their own bodies (thank you, abortion rhetoric!) and profiting handsomely from the results?

When I was in eleventh grade, I invited a new boyfriend to come to my house after school one day. My mother was outside gardening, or maybe she was on the telephone, or reading—she was around, but through a glass. The boy and I made Top Ramen at the stove, and afterward I invited him to come up to my bedroom. I had never been told not to do such a thing; I seemed then to be lacking a lot of clear information about what I could and could not do. My parents were preoccupied at the time with other things. I was the youngest girl in a daughter-raising project that they appeared to think had gone terribly wrong. They were no longer giving the enterprise their full oomph.

In the bedroom the atmosphere was charged. I remember that he sat on my Pier 1 wicker chair, and that I showed him my wall calendar, which had a different, adorable kitten for each month. And then, abruptly, I said that we should go back downstairs, and he stood—immediately—and followed me. At the foot of the stairs we found my mother, looking as though she had been close to charging up.

"Never bring a boy to your bedroom," she told me afterward.

"Why not?"

There was a fumbling for words, and then an answer: "Because he might go to school and tell other boys what your comforter looks like."

It was a white Dior comforter with yellow rosebuds and matching sheets. The bed was a Sears four-poster princess bed, a little-girl's bed, but we had taken off the canopy and added the Dior linens to dress it up for a teenager. I had wanted pink roses, but the pink had not unexpectedly gone on sale at the El Cerrito Capwell's. The yellow had.

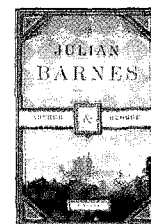
"That's so *stupid*," I yelled at my mother. "Just so completely *stupid*!" She sighed wearily—the raising-girls sigh, the sigh of bottomless despair. Why hadn't she thrown herself off the

NEW FICTION

Finds and flops

BY ELIZABETH JUDD

Julian Barnes, a literary stylist without rival, has fashioned riveting fiction out of almost comically esoteric mysteries (consider the brilliant point-counterpoint surrounding the question of which stuffed parrot was the true model for Loulou in Flaubert's "Un coeur simple"). His post-modern antics work because of an essential Englishness: beneath every diverting pirouette lies a bedrock of stodgy precision and abiding intelligence. In *Arthur & George*, which was shortlisted for the 2005 Man Booker Prize, Barnes sidelines his immense cleverness to pursue a more conventional but sweepingly ambitious whodunit. He transforms an obscure historical footnote—Arthur Conan Doyle's campaign to right the Great Wyrley Outrages, a little-known miscarriage of British justice sometimes compared to France's Dreyfus affair—into a mesmerizing investigation of the Anglo-Saxon character.



ARTHUR & GEORGE

by Julian Barnes
Knopf

Through parallel stories unfolding in tandem (a favorite Barnes device), the novelist juxtaposes Arthur's Catholic upbringing in nineteenth-century Edinburgh against George Edalji's modest childhood in a farming community outside Birmingham. Rash and impassioned, Arthur later flourishes in his haphazard professional endeavors while George, the dutiful solicitor son of a Parsi vicar, is falsely convicted in the gruesome mutilation of a pony. Feeling safely ensconced in "the beating heart of the British Empire," George assumes he will be vindicated on appeal, but Arthur recognizes that an exotic surname and dark skin set George decisively apart. Barnes teases out the ironies of a nation that lionizes Sherlock Holmes and his penetrating logic while steadfastly ignoring facts and principles contrary to its imperious notions of rectitude. Hypocrisy, Arthur sadly concludes, is "what this country does best." *Arthur & George* succeeds as an effortlessly gripping detective novel, a stirring morality tale, and an inspired riff on the fault lines threatening the English and their centuries of unshakable self-regard.

Elizabeth Judd is a writer in Washington, D.C.



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Golden Gate Bridge at last opportunity? Why had she ever been so foolish as to think it was good news each time the obstetrician told her she had been delivered of a girl?

But even in my teenage snit I understood what she was talking about: not the comforter but my reputation. Not the boy himself (who was a very nice person—anyone could tell it just from meeting him) but the immutable truth about boys: They want most what we keep private. When it's known, it's lessened.

At the time of my adolescence my mother was too distracted to give me everything I needed to turn out well. But 20 percent of her attention was enough, because the whole culture was supporting her. The notion that a girl should not give her sexuality away too freely was so solidly built into the national consciousness that my mother didn't have to snap out of her depression and give me a comprehensive lecture on boys for me to understand what she meant. It was a period when artists and entertainers and commercial America in general did not have untrammelled access to the country's youth. Television shows were heavily censored, as were radio stations. George Carlin's "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television" was hilarious not just for its string of bad words but because of the context in which he invited us to imagine their use: think of turning on the *TV* and hearing the word "fuck"! Sex ed in those days was a little like driver's ed: a grimly delivered set of facts, copiously illustrated with hideous examples of what could go wrong if you were foolhardy enough to operate the machinery. ("Is there going to be a test?" a girl asked about the contraception unit. "Your life is the test," she was told.) At the time, feminists were distracted by the vast project of American womanhood; they had not yet turned their attention to the country's girls.

As a parent, I am horrified by the changes that have taken place in the common culture over the past thirty years. I believe that we are raising children in a kind of post-apocalyptic landscape in which no forces beyond individual households—individual mothers and fathers—are protecting

children from pornography and violent entertainment. The "it takes a village" philosophy is a joke, because the village is now so polluted and so desolate of commonly held, child-appropriate moral values that my job as a mother is not to rely on the village but to protect my children from it.

I'm not, however, terrified by the oral-sex craze. If I were to learn that my children had engaged in oral sex—outside a romantic relationship, and as young adolescents—I would be sad. But I wouldn't think that they had been damaged by the experience; I wouldn't think I had failed catastrophically as a mother, or that they would need therapy. Because I don't have daughters, I have sons.

I am old-fashioned enough to believe that men and boys are not as likely to be wounded, emotionally and spiritually, by early sexual experience, or by sexual experience entered into without romantic commitment, as are women and girls. I think that girls are vulnerable to great damage through the kind of sex in which they are, as individuals, as valueless and unrecognizable as chattel. Society has let its girls down in every possible way. It has refused to assert—or even to acknowledge—that female sexuality is as intricately connected to kindness and trust as it is to gratification and pleasure. It's in the nature of who we are.

But perhaps the girls themselves understand this essential truth.

As myriad forces were combining to reshape our notions of public decency and propriety, to ridicule the concept that privacy and dignity are valuable and allied qualities of character and that exhibitionism as an end in itself might not be beneficial for a young girl, at the exact moment when girls were encouraged to think of themselves as victims of an oppressive patriarchy and to act on an imperative of default aggression—at this very time a significant number of young girls were beginning to form an entirely new code of sexual ethics and expectations. It was a code in which their own physical pleasure was of no consequence—was in fact so entirely beside the point that their preferred mode of sexual activ-

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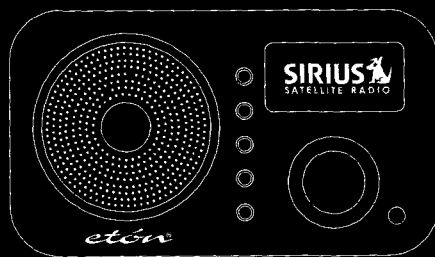
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ity was performing unrequited oral sex. *Deep Throat* lingers in the popular imagination because it was one of the few porn movies to trade on an original and inspired premise: what a perfect world it would be if the clitoris were located in a woman's throat. In a world like that a man wouldn't have to cajole a woman to perform fellatio on him; she would be just as eager to get it on as he was. But this was a fantasy; a girl may derive a variety of consequences, intended and otherwise, from servicing boys in this manner, but her own sexual gratification is not one of them. The modern girl's casual willingness to perform oral sex may—as some cool-headed observers of the phenomenon like to propose—be her way of maintaining a post-feminist power in her sexual dealings, by being fully in control of the sexual act and of the pleasure a boy receives from it. Or it may be her desperate attempt to do something that the culture refuses to encourage: to keep her own sexuality—the emotions and the desires, as well as the anatomical real estate itself—private, secret, unviolated. It may not be her technical virginity that she is trying to preserve; it may be her own sexual awakening—which is all she really has left to protect anymore.

We've made a world for our girls in which the pornography industry has become increasingly mainstream, in which Planned Parenthood's response to the oral-sex craze has been to set up a help line, in which the forces of feminism have worked relentlessly to erode the patriarchy—which, despite its manifold evils, held that providing for the sexual safety of young girls was among its primary reasons for existence. And here are America's girls: experienced beyond their years, lacking any clear message from the adult community about the importance of protecting their modesty, adrift in one of the most explicitly sexualized cultures in the history of the world. Here are America's girls: on their knees. ■

Caitlin Flanagan has contributed to The Atlantic's books section since 2000. She is also a staff writer at The New Yorker and the author of an upcoming book, To Hell With All That: Loving and Loathing Our Inner Housewife.

Downhill All the Way

An adroit new history of the British Empire in the post-Victorian era

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The late Christopher Hill—arguably not A. N. Wilson's beau ideal as a historian—once told me a small joke in his mildly stuttering style. It seemed that the fifth or sixth husband of Barbara Hutton had been interviewed on his nuptial night, and when asked how he felt at being the latest to possess the celebrated Woolworth heirless, had replied, "Well, I know what I have g-got to d-do, but I am not quite sure how I am going to make it i-i-i-interesting."

Some of the same apprehensiveness may descend upon anyone who undertakes to write about the eclipse of British power in the first half of the twentieth century. The basic outlines—or, if you prefer, the essential holds and grapples and maneuvers—are tolerably well known. Death of the Old Queen in 1901; a nasty and expensive war in South Africa presaging a deadly rivalry with her vicious grandson, the Kaiser; a "Great War" that bled the country white; two decades of stupidity and drift marked by fatuities such as the restoration of the gold standard and the myopic placation of unappeasable dictators; another cataclysmic war, which caused the reluctant surrender of global supremacy to the United States. Honor partly rescued by titanic standing of Winston Churchill and unexpectedly long reign of a second Elizabeth; both these wasting assets subject to sharply diminishing returns.

Wilson does not depart very much from this well-beaten track. Indeed, he more than once cites, and actually rather lamely concludes with, Dean Acheson's much quoted remark that Britain had "lost an empire and not yet found a role." That fairly banal observation, made at West Point in 1962, might have been overlooked if it had not so infuriated Churchill. It is also outside the ostensible scope of Wilson's book,

which closes with the early 1950s and suggests that a trilogy (including it and its predecessor, *The Victorians*) may be in train.

I must say that I hope so. Wilson does indeed know how to make it interesting. He manages this by an adroit alternation between the macrocosmic and the microcosmic. At one point he takes us on a tour of the great British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, in 1924, with

lavishly exotic pavilions provided by India and Malaya and a sturdy sculpture, in pure Canadian butter, of the Prince of Wales. (It is easy to forget that Britain ended the First World War with *more* territories under its control than it had enjoyed in 1914.) Then we are shown the 1936 funeral of the first Communist member of Parliament, an Indian Parsee named Shapurji Saklatvala; the precincts of the crematorium

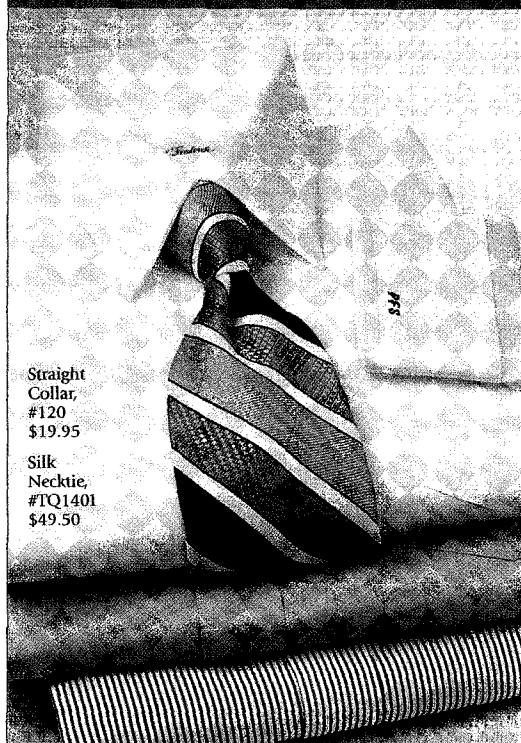
were still decked with red flags when the next customer's cortege arrived—containing the coffin of Rudyard Kipling. By that time the loyal and butter-sculpted Prince of Wales

had mutated into the willful and mutinous King Edward VIII, whose sexual thrall to the Baltimore divorcee Wal-

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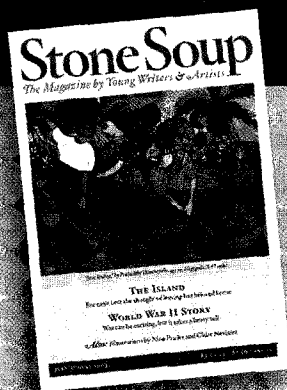
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lis Simpson was to provoke the first ever abdication. (Wilson relates the last words of old King George V, father to this impetuous boy, and expresses the usual doubt that he ever asked, "How is the empire?" as he lay dying. He does not canvass the idea that the expiring monarch actually inquired, "How's the vampire?": an allusion to the designing woman who had already undermined the throne.) And he has no patience with the well-attested view that young Edward was "a self-ish sybarite, a Nazi sympathizer," saying that "history" has a "babyish" need to believe this, when (as he does not mention) it was the conclusion reluctantly arrived at by the eminent royal historian Philip Ziegler.

No matter. Wilson may also be unfair to E. M. Forster, but he writes in the spirit of Forster's old maxim "Only connect." In particular, and in a very clever way, he allows us to see all the prefigurations of that rising American influence, which, slowly accreting, was to burst upon the post-1945 British as if it had come as a complete surprise. The first female to take her seat in the House of Commons (Nancy Astor) was an American. Winston Churchill's influential mother was an American. Kipling's wife was an American. Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, the former from the English music hall and the latter from the Deep South, are imaginatively represented by Wilson as a duo based on Henry James's Anglo-American ambiguities. And it made little difference that atom-splitting, radar, and television were British discoveries, since like jazz and cinema the main uptake of all the big ideas was on the American side of the Atlantic. (The British abandoned television broadcasts as soon as the Second World War began, thus conducting the propaganda fight largely on radio: a medium dominated by an Irish-American named William Joyce, or "Lord Haw Haw," who transmitted from Hitler's Berlin.) There is a wider Hibernian subtext to the story. The two British teak-heads responsible for the Amritsar massacre, in April of 1919, and therefore for the moral end of the British dominion in India, were General Reginald Dyer

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and Governor Michael O'Dwyer. Both were Irish-Protestant Unionists. It was the Orange Unionists who defended them in Parliament, at a time when Ireland itself was terrorized by the Black and Tans, and it was Sir Henry Wilson—leader of the 1914 Ulster mutiny—who pronounced that if Ireland was lost, then the whole imperial game was up. Reading this book, I was suddenly put in mind of its illustrious forerunner, George Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. Like Dangerfield, A. N. Wilson can grasp the encapsulating anecdote and the numinous coincidence, and capture the manner in which tragedy gibbers happily over the shoulders of the group photographed on the well-kept lawn.

Ninety-two years on, and liberals, conservatives, and Marxists can all reckon August of 1914 as the month from which everything measurable is—to annex the title of Leonard Woolf's autobiography—downhill all the way. As often as Wilson counsels us against the fallacy of scanning the past through the reversed telescope of the present, he is unable to free himself from this crucial—and just—conclusion. The mechanization of warfare, the glorification of the state, the mass mobilization of peoples, the advantage given to demagogues, and the permission to engage in genocide under the color of warfare: all this would have raised the eyebrows of the most self-confident Victorian imperialist.

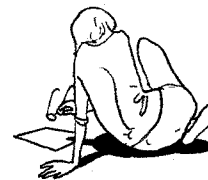
In counterpoint, then, to the grandiose general globalizing of “telegrams and anger,” ultimatums and campaigns, wars and alarms, Wilson stresses the quiet, discreet, private, faintly annoying way in which many of the British so often managed to find the situation desperate but not serious. He spends time in the company of reform-minded rural vicars of the Church of England (one or two of them satisfyingly deranged), and with those charitable and voluntary associations that began to repair the damage inflicted by Victorian slums and the Victorian factory system. Perhaps too much aware that the usual model for this habit of “decency” and modesty is the austere

NEW FICTION

A CLOSE READ

What makes good writing good

BY CHRISTINA SCHWARZ



“And yet characters like Françoise are life-giving: they broaden one’s outlook. Even their stratagems and deceits are instructive; one can observe them, marvel at them, even as one disapproves. I could imagine how she would have conducted the evening that had just passed: bold questions, a little mockery, an expectation that money would be spent, a predictable conclusion. She would have formed a more or less accurate assessment of his social position, his income, and treated him accordingly, perhaps in a way that most men would understand. I knew nothing about him beyond what he had told me, or was willing to tell me, choosing to remain discreet about what he was determined to conceal. In comparison I had talked too much, and at the same time said nothing of interest. This was not a useful way to proceed.” —from **Leaving Home**, by Anita Brookner (Random House)

Clarity is Anita Brookner’s coin. Brookner doesn’t rely on evocative metaphor or unusual phrasing to make her novels compelling, and she’s well known for eschewing dramatic action: nearly all the movement in her books occurs in her characters’ heads, and even that is more reflection than motion. Her sentences are complex (she makes use of the colon and the semicolon more often than most writers), but this complexity is obviously in service to the explication of complicated, hierarchical ideas—observations that require defining with a general term that must then, for the sake of clarity, be redefined (as in this excerpt’s first sentence) or be broken into smaller, illustrative parts (as in its second). The sentences that follow, with the

exception of the last, are also built of modifying phrases that add shade upon shade of meaning. Nevertheless, Brookner’s measured tone, her precision, and her disregard for obvious poetic devices make her writing strikingly spare. She’s wonderfully economical, too, when illustrating character, as in the four neat phrases that sum up Françoise’s behavior with men, and in the use of the formal “one,” which emphasizes the distance at which the narrator habitually keeps herself from others. Brookner’s most effective use of economy in this paragraph, however, may be the final statement: in its very simplicity it undercuts the paragraphs of involved self-reflection that precede it.

Christina Schwarz is the author of the novels Drowning Ruth and All Is Vanity.

figure of George Orwell, he tries too hard to be different from the norm and makes the amazing claim that *The Road to Wigan Pier* was a “treasured text” of the Blackshirts. (A swift glance at the relevant footnote reveals this weird notion to be based on a private conversation with Sir Oswald Mosley’s widow—an unrepentant blue-blooded Nazi bitch who most probably had not read the book and who certainly had not noticed Orwell’s despair, in its pages, at the way in which some workers were stupid enough to be gulled by her husband.) Still, and at a time when Sir Oswald Mosley was being taken seriously, about 70,000 European

Jews managed to make an emergency home by crossing the Channel. Wilson mentions Popper, Pevsner, Solti, Freud, Menuhin, and Elton (and could have added Koestler and Deutscher, and also have mentioned how many were interned and maltreated), but probably captures the awkwardness best by relating the story of Eva Neurach in the clutches of a hostess.

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“Berlin.”
“Ah, well, never mind.”

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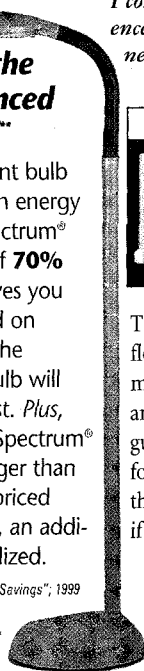
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But the insistent politeness and the tradition of uncomfortable hospitality still count for something. (I am told that the great hostess Sybil Colefax, finding Albert Einstein among her guests at one such soiree, was instructed to put him at his ease and began by asking, "Did you hear that mad old Woofles has left Pug-Wug completely flat—and run off with Binky-poo?" There is a reason why Evelyn Waugh can be regarded as a social historian of this epoch.)

The cover of the book shows the chiaroscuro photograph, ineffaceable from modern memory, of Wren's masterpiece, St. Paul's, as it was enshrouded by smoke and flame during a Nazi bombing raid. But in his discussion of the Second World War—still regarded by many British people and by even more Americans as the crisis that justified and legitimized everything—Wilson adopts a tone of skepticism that approaches sourness. In the first place, the war could have been avoided by a less selfish and supine policy during the preceding decades. In the second place, its conduct was often very close to criminal, in particular as regards the immolation of German cities and civilians. In the third place, having begun with the appeasement of Nazis and Fascists, it closed with a capitulation to Stalinism and a sellout to the nascent American empire. There have been several growling ultra-Tory voices raised among British historians in the past decade to the same effect. Some of these voices are reactionary in the strict sense of the term, and nostalgic for both Joseph and Neville Chamberlain. Wilson takes the view that Britain is well shot of the colonies and believes that the social reforms of the postwar Labour government were noble in both intention and effect. That makes a nice change.

The late John Muggeridge, son of Malcolm, described to me once how he had been dispatched to Kenya in the early 1950s, and had voyaged there by way of Malta, Cyprus, and the Suez Canal zone without ever having to carry a British passport. It is amazing to reflect both how recent all this was and how long ago it all seems. Wilson has the ability to evoke the past



Wilson stresses the quiet, discreet, private, faintly annoying way in which many of the British in the early twentieth century so often managed to find the decline of empire desperate but not serious.

without condescension, and to measure its passing without sentimentality. Where this will take him with what seems like the necessary succeeding volume, I cannot easily tell. Just ahead lies the Britain of Margaret Thatcher—who had a soft spot, if not indeed a hard spot, for what she termed “Victorian values.” And this must give place to the Britain of Tony Blair, who recreated social democracy by fusing it with post-Thatcherism. Both of them, in their different ways, disproved Dean Acheson, by showing that Britain had the ability to act as a medium between Washington and Brussels. Both of them also showed that some shells were left in the British post-colonial arsenal. And then there is the question—oddly unaddressed by Wilson—of the English language as a lingua franca for everything from air-traffic control to the Internet. I believe I can guess that Wilson is no friend to the American global mission. (In a rare concession to sheer or mere euphemism,

he describes Chirac’s and Schröder’s reaction to the Iraq operation as one of “skeptical alarm.”) But then, it may be Barbara Hutton who has the last word. When the *Titanic*, that triumph of British shipbuilding, was first launched, it was shown as being greater in length than even the Woolworth Building in New York—then the tallest skyscraper in the world. Within a few decades Hutton had given her mansion in London to the American embassy for use as an ambassadorial residence, easily outdoing in magnificence anything that could be offered by Carlton House Terrace. And within a few years of that my friends’ parents were abandoning the traditional corner shop and country store to do what they used to despise: shop at Woolworth’s. Britishness suffered great battlefield and market reverses, but it was also five-and-dimed away, and perhaps that’s the detail that makes it interesting. ■

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a columnist for Vanity Fair.

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Top ten best sellers in Turkey, as of November 2005, according to the Publishers’ Association of Turkey

- 1. Those Crazy Turks**, by Turgut Özakman. A Micheneresque opus recounting the battle for the creation of the modern Turkish republic.
- 2. The Zahir**, by Paulo Coelho. The popular Brazilian writer’s multicontinental odyssey of loss, love, and the search for self.
- 3. Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**, by J. K. Rowling. The penultimate volume of ... oh, you know.
- 4. The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari**, by Robin Sharma. *Wall Street* meets *On the Road*, generously larded with New Age flapdoodle.
- 5. The Longest Night**, by Ahmet Altan. A tale of ill-starred romance in the grandest tradition of Turkish tear-jerkers.
- 6. Amat**, by Ihsan Oktay Anar. A swashbuckling epic transports readers back to a Turkish galleon, the Golden Horn, and the glory days of the Ottoman Empire.
- 7. Where’re You Headed, Sister?** by Gülse Birsal. A popular Turkish political humorist skewers Dubya.
- 8. Metal Storm 2—Salvation**, by Burak Turna. Continues the saga begun in a previous best seller, *Metal Storm*, of Turkey in a future battle with U.S. invaders.
- 9. Living to Tell the Tale**, by Gabriel García Márquez. A memoir: the early years of Colombia’s most renowned modern novelist.
- 10. Metal Storm 2—The Lost Coffin**, by Orkun Uçar. Drawing Israel into the fray, one of *Metal Storm*’s co-authors pens his own sequel, which covers a U.S. bombardment of Atatürk’s mausoleum, in Ankara, and the mystery of the Father of the Turks’ vanished coffin.

—JEFFREY TAYLER

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TRAVELS

Nova Scotia, Mon Amour

The province's quirks and inaccessibility are its very charms

BY ALEX BEAM

My beloved Nova Scotia adopted a new travel slogan last spring: "There's a reason great places are a little hard to get to." Truer than ever! One of the two main ferry links from the United States has discontinued service. Last summer, at the height of the tourist season, the Halifax International Airport opted to modernize its runways, taking the airport's instrument-landing equipment offline for almost a month.

So now the province can be really

hard to get to, requiring, say, a fifteen-hour drive from New York City, or trips to Bar Harbor or Portland, Maine, for the only remaining ferry service from the United States. An even more cumbersome option requires a stay in St. John, New Brunswick (site of what looks like the world's largest oil-tank farm), and then a ferry to Digby, across the Bay of Fundy. Predictably, tourism from the United States to Nova Scotia declined in 2005—and not for the first time.

The province has always had trouble selling itself. Last November, at an Atlantic Maritime tourism seminar in Boston, the kilt-clad media-relations manager Randy Brooks admitted to a roomful of travel writers, "We've found that lighthouses and lobsters don't sell down here." Instead I see the province promoting "bouldering"—think rock-climbing, but smaller—and such oddball fare as the Festival of Extraordinary Teapots. The highlight of the tourism shindig was a PR woman's assertion that Prince Edward Island is "sort of like Hawaii." Both P.E.I. and Hawaii are islands, she noted, and both

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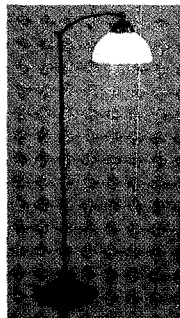


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offer golf. Yes, and *Fanny Hill* is a lot like the Book of Ruth.

I have spent more time in Nova Scotia than I like to admit. I went to summer camp near Digby for four years, and I have returned again and again for summer visits to a home my grandfather bought just after World War I. Nova Scotia is one of those places where there isn't much to do, so what you can do you do to excess. For instance, my family has visited Ross Farm, "Nova Scotia's Living Museum of Agriculture," at least five times. Think Plimoth Plantation, but much, much smaller. We have seen the instructional videos so often that my wife and I are confident we could weave our own flax if necessary, just as the Rosses did. Hard up for thrills one night in a motel near Truro, we rose at 4:00 A.M., leaving a tiny baby asleep in our room, just to watch the surging tide of the Bay of Fundy rush up the Shubenacadie River. This phenomenon is known as a tidal bore; the predictable wordplay ensued.

One does scramble for things to do, especially on rainy or foggy days, which thanks to global warming are fewer and fewer each summer. Of course, "warming" is a relative term in Nova Scotia. Ever since I was ten years old I've heard endless prattle about the warming waters of the Gulf Stream, which supposedly caress a portion of the Nova Scotia coast. Randy Brooks spoke to the travel writers in Boston of "the warmest water north of the Virginias." I assume he was referring to some plutocrat's swimming pool. I've swum in the Atlantic, the Bay of Fundy, St. Margaret's Bay, and plenty of tributaries in between, and here is all you need to know: *BRRRRR!* The many inland lakes are swimmable at the peak of summer; the ocean is not. But a portion of it is drinkable: I have never forgotten the taste of Bras d'Or water on my lips. The Bras d'Or, a vast, gorgeous sailing lake favored by rich Americans (for example, the Grosvenors), has two narrow outlets on the North Atlantic. But the water tastes sweet, not brackish; don't ask me why.

In the category of memorable time-fillers, I once drove my family, including



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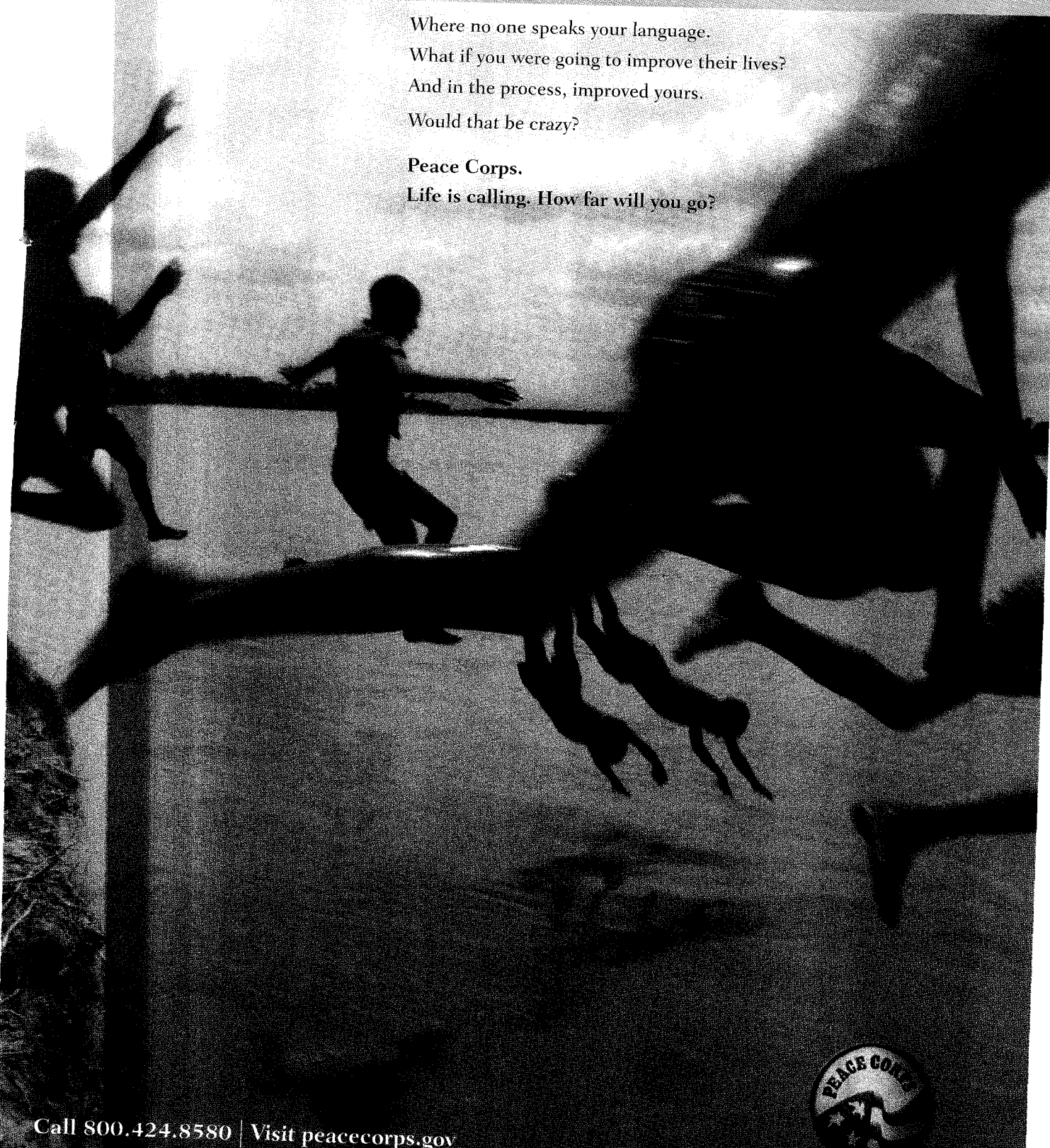
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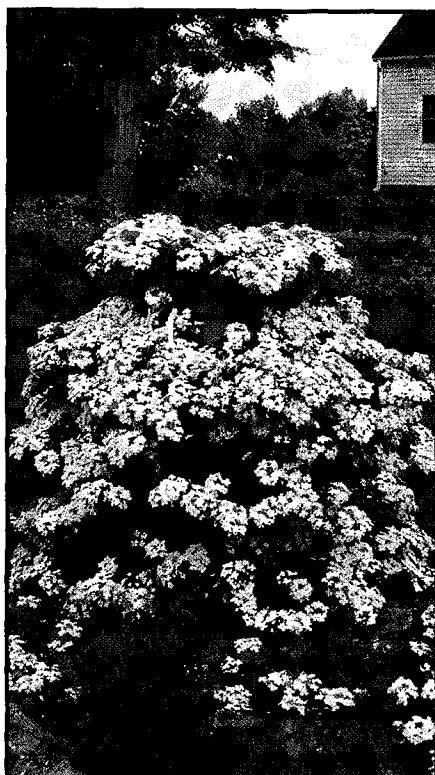
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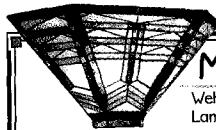
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COUNTERPOINT

a severely disapproving mother, several hundred miles to Great Village, just because the poet Elizabeth Bishop had lived there as a young girl. A poet I met on the fantail of the old, slow ferry had told me that several of Bishop's poems—"Sandpiper" ("The beach hisses like fat"), "The Moose" ("home of the long tides/where the bay leaves the sea"), and of course "First Death in Nova Scotia" ("In the cold, cold parlor/my mother laid out Arthur")—have Nova Scotia roots. "Great Village" is a misnomer: there is nothing at all in the place except a jumbly general store whose proprietor sold me a picture of Bishop's home as it looked when she lived there. I was the second person in three years to have made the pilgrimage.

Today Nova Scotia boasts a modest literary scene. Like Bishop's childhood village, the great Nova Scotia novel—*Barometer Rising*, by Hugh MacLennan—isn't really so great. It's a historical thriller set in 1917, when a freighter carrying half a million pounds of TNT blew up in Halifax Harbor. The Big Bang sits at the heart of event-starved Nova Scotia's literary universe (yes, I know all about Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Evangeline" and the expulsion of the Acadians). Robert MacNeil, formerly of PBS's *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour*, wrote a novel ("earnest, traditional"—*Publishers Weekly*) featuring the explosion, and just now Laura MacDonald is promoting her 350-page non-fiction narrative *Curse of The Narrows: The Halifax Disaster of 1917* ("excessive detail and flat prose"—*Publishers Weekly*). The best book featuring Halifax is Anthony Hyde's globe-trotting thriller-diller masterpiece, *The Red Fox*. Alistair MacLeod's excellent *No Great Mischief* likewise sprawls across Ontario and Quebec as well as Nova Scotia.

My wife would have you visit Halifax; I am not so sure. I do love the grass-covered old fortress, the Citadel, but I love the grassy old battleworks in Annapolis Royal, 120 miles to the west, much more. (And be sure to check out the eye-popping Annapolis Royal Historical Gardens.) Halifax bills itself as "a hot spot"—"Exciting. Eclectic. Romantic"—and perhaps it is

all of those things. It was the Halifax-based Salter Street Films that produced the hilarious television shorts "Talking to Americans," which cruelly mocked Americans' wild ignorance of events above the 49th Parallel. In one episode a staffer asked Columbia students and professors to sign a petition urging Canadians to discontinue the practice of abandoning the elderly on ice floes. Many did.

I do admit to having wonderful memories of Halifax. One night, while my mother and I were attending the Atlantic Film Festival—think Cannes, but smaller and colder—a driver parked directly athwart our parking space, so we couldn't get out. A hearty band of inebriates streamed out of the local pub, lifted the offending automobile, and dumped it in the middle of the street. Halifax entered my family's mythology when we learned that a server at a local Tim Horton's—think Dunkin' Donuts, but a hundred times better—had been selling marijuana in bags of doughnut holes, called Timbits. If you asked for fifteen Timbits instead of the customary twenty, you got dope. After the bust my sons and I kept asking for "fifteen Timbits," to no avail. Canada-philes will not be surprised to learn that the accused never spent a night in jail.

Tourism authorities would insist that you visit the painfully quaint town of Lunenburg, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It leaves me cold. There you can tour an old-fashioned fishing vessel called the *Theresa E. Connor*. That takes about twelve minutes. Of the Atlantic Fisheries Museum—need we say more? If you know your Canadian art history, you know that Lunenburg's Houston North Gallery was founded by James Houston, the Toronto artist who taught the Inuit—a "First Nations" people, in Canadaspeak—how to earn money carving little slouch-shouldered polar bears out of dolomite and soapstone. That's a must-visit for anyone fascinated by Eskimo art, which I am not.

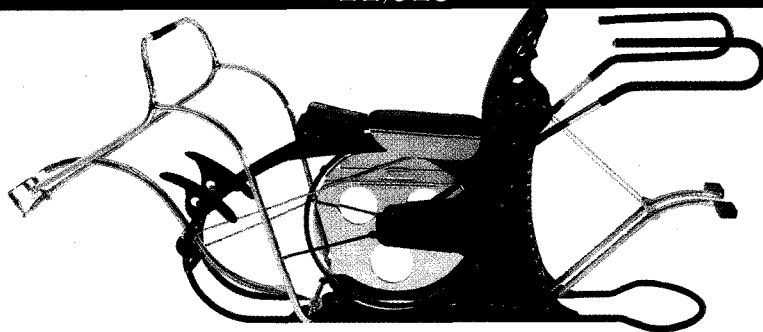
For my family Lunenburg's main attraction has always been the Subway restaurant and proximity to the beautiful "town of three churches," Mahone Bay. In the continuing interest of time-

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killing I have attended the Wooden Boat Festival at Mahone Bay five times in the past eight years, and I neither own nor have much interest in wooden boats.

Any jackass can kick down a barn, as Bill Clinton used to say about naysayers. So what *should* you do in Nova Scotia? The Cabot Trail, around Cape Breton Island, is unspeakably beautiful. On your way there, be sure to taste those sweet Bras d'Or waters, and don't miss the Alexander Graham Bell Museum, near the beginning of the trail, where Canada boldly takes credit for the Bostonian's invention of the telephone. You must visit Louisburg, the restored eighteenth-century French fortress on the right claw of the lobster-shaped province. At the tail end of the province Francophone Acadian culture lives on in the dreary Pubnicos (Upper West, Middle West, Lower West), where I have stayed. The food there is terrible. But my family's favorite Nova Scotia restaurant—the Quarterdeck, in Summerville—is only a half hour away. And don't miss the opportunity to see seals gamboling in the frigid Atlantic waters off the Seaside Adjunct of the Kejimikujik National Park.

In summary: Yes to Annapolis Royal, with that citadel and those gardens; yes to Wolfville, with its famous Acadia University and the theater festival I plan one day to attend; yes to biking on the flat terrain everywhere in the province; and yes to picnicking at the wonderful provincial seaside parks that crop up every ten miles or so. Yes to visiting Tancook Island, once the throbbing center of Nova Scotia's sauerkraut production. Yes even to the two terribly sad Swissair Flight 111 memorials bracketing St. Margaret's Bay, and to the graves of *Titanic* victims in Halifax's Fairview Cemetery, which are laid out in the shape of a broken hull.

Randy Brooks tells me that Nova Scotia has stopped billing itself as "hard to get to." "In general, I think we're accessible," he says. Of course, his interests and mine are opposed. He wants thousands of tourists to flock to the province. As for me, it is a treasure I would prefer to keep to myself. ▀

Alex Beam is a columnist for The Boston Globe.

MUSIC

The Singing Epidemic

All of a sudden everybody wants to be a jazz singer—and a few are actually good at it

BY FRANCIS DAVIS

“Sexy,” “sensual,” and “seductive” are words being tossed around a lot in jazz these days, in praise of a number of comely female vocalists who must not be my type. In jazz criticism two full generations of musicians and styles are commonly referred to as “postbop,” meaning subsequent to Charlie Parker’s and Dizzy Gillespie’s innovations of the late 1940s. Diana Krall, a perennial Grammy nominee and two-time winner, for her albums *When I Look in Your Eyes* (1999) and *Live in Paris* (2002), is the first jazz star who could be described as post-feminist. Until very recently a female singer’s physical attributes were something a male journalist would pretend not to notice, for fear of appearing unenlightened. But that was before a popular culture cynically geared to adolescent males and their hair-trigger libidos wore down the resistance of adults, and before *Sex and the City* reglorified the girly girl. Reading about Krall, you’d think it was kowtowing to outdated political correctness not to gush about her “full and sensuous lips,” “beautiful skin and straight blond hair,” and “endless legs.”

Musically, Krall’s appeal is as a throwback. The Great American Songbook codified by Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald as a sensible adult alternative to rock-and-roll in the 1950s skews old today. So does jazz. Over forty herself now, Krall hasn’t lured college-age audiences to jazz (she’s often said to resemble the actress Kim Basinger, whose last significant role was in *8 Mile*, as Eminem’s mother). But riding the momentum created by Linda Ronstadt’s LPs of standards with the arranger Nelson Riddle in the early 1980s; MTV’s embrace of Tony Bennett a decade later; the tears for Sinatra following his death, in 1998; the graying of the Baby Boom; and somehow even the ubiquity of Starbucks, Krall has done as much

as anyone to renegotiate “old” into chic, sophisticated, sexy.

For me, where she leaves the most to be desired is in the area of rhythm. This is curious in that her breakthrough album, a 1996 tribute to the Nat King Cole Trio of the 1940s, opened with a novelty song called “I’m an Errand Girl for Rhythm.” But it’s hardly surprising, because the supple swing that was practically a birthright for even the lesser singers of Sinatra and Fitzgerald’s generation doesn’t come naturally to singers born after the eruption of rock and



soul. “If you wanted to pat your foot to [Krall’s] singing, it would fall asleep,” Nat Hentoff wrote a few years ago. My first reaction is to say that’s an exaggeration; my second is to wish I’d said it. Krall’s ballads drag something awful, and her habit of coyly bending and breaking notes and syllables as if that were all there is to singing jazz causes her to lose the beat on medium tempos, which are as fast as she ever gets. She has a small voice, which needn’t be a problem—so did Billie Holiday, Chet Baker, and Shirley Horn (whose confidential delivery Krall often seems to

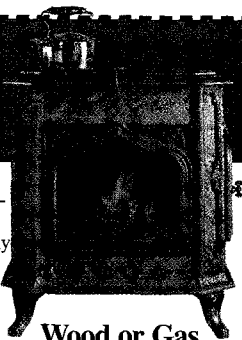


be imitating). Unlike all theirs, Krall’s voice gets trapped in her throat and jaw. She doesn’t breathe properly, nor does she know to aim for what vocal coaches call “the mask”—the area comprising the hard palate, the sinus cavities, and the cheekbones, which allows even smaller voices to resonate. These technical deficiencies put tension in her voice, and it’s not the sort of tension that can be resolved to yield the relaxed sensation of swing. Nor is it sexual tension, despite what so many of her male admirers think they hear.

Then there’s Jane Monheit, a brunette Rapunzel about fifteen years younger than Krall. I happened to hear her in New York a couple of nights after the 2004 presidential election, when the midtown audience seemed in a blue state in more ways than one. It could have been an ideal situation for a performer: one form of heartbreak is similar to another, and almost any torch song convincingly delivered would have soothed us. Monheit’s big opportunity was on Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz’s “Haunted Heart,” a ballad immortalized by Jo Stafford in 1947. Monheit overembellished the melody, which might have been forgivable if she hadn’t also overemoted, once even interjecting a theatrical sob. Stafford could have told her that the point isn’t to show your audience you’re feeling a lyric but to make *them* feel it. I don’t think I was the only one unmoved.

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We expect more from singers than we do from instrumentalists, because words speak to us in a way no trumpet or saxophone can—and because their instrument is also ours. It's only natural that we're harder on them when they let us down. Sometimes, when my patience wears thin and my thoughts border on cruel, I worry that I sound like Simon Cowell, *American Idol*'s dumbed-down Addison DeWitt. A few seasons ago Cowell told a teenaged finalist that she made him feel as if he were at a party being forced to listen to somebody's untalented child. Auditioning new vocal CDs, I often get the same feeling.

"Everybody wants to be famous," Cowell has commented. "It's the fastest-growing epidemic on earth." There's an epidemic in jazz, too: a singing epidemic. The "number and variety" of American singers is "astonishing and almost endless," Whitney Balliett began a *New Yorker* profile of Tony Bennett; in 1974 he went on to illustrate his point by naming 118 of them, famous and obscure, living and dead, from Russ Columbo to Roberta Flack. I swear I've received that many new CDs by aspiring jazz singers in just the past few months. I constantly get e-mails from publicists asking if I've had a chance to listen to this one or that one, and if so, what I think. More often than not the honest answer is, I can't remember.

All of a sudden everybody wants to be a jazz singer, or at least to sing standards. This includes middle-aged pop stars trying to age gracefully. I've lost count of how many of them have released collections of standards in the past few years, but the list starts with Joni Mitchell, Rod Stewart, Boz Scaggs, Cyndi Lauper, Rita Coolidge, Queen Latifah, and Debby Boone. Only the idiosyncratic Mitchell demonstrates much feeling for older songs. The one who's enjoyed the most success, and not undeservedly, is Stewart, whose rhythm is strictly follow-the-bouncing-ball, but who could give most of the new jazz singers I've heard lessons in how to put a song across. Even the country singer Ronnie Milsap has gotten into the act, as have the apoplectic talk-show host Regis Philbin, the red-haired *Ameri-*

can Idol finalist John Stevens, and the opera diva Renée Fleming (who lavishes so much attention on vocal coloration and so little on making sense of the words that you wish there were supertitles). A Christian singer named Mary Haskell chose an album of standards (albeit only uplifting ones) for her secular crossover. But the prize goes to Paul Anka and his "swinging" versions of such rock songs as "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Eye of the Tiger"—pseudo-jazz for hepcats who



can't tell the difference between Nirvana and Survivor, or between Anka and Bobby Darin.

The new singers don't necessarily all sound alike, but they tend to resemble one another in mistaking vocal calisthenics for improvisation. Mariah Carey, Christina Aguilera, and the hopefuls on *American Idol* are ruining pop singing with their overuse of melisma, a style of ornamentation that Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, and other soul singers brought with them from gospel in the 1950s and 1960s. For the great soul singers, holding on to a syllable and stretching it out over several notes was a way of suggesting that something had grabbed them and wouldn't let go; whether it was the Holy Ghost or lust depended on the song. Carey and the others are just showing off their pipes, even though they have much less to flaunt. The jazz version of this is riffing like a horn, and although this is supposedly the mark of the jazz singer, it's a problem, because

delivering lyrics requires making literal as well as musical sense.

Simon Cowell occasionally gives useful advice, and in the same spirit I find myself wanting to caution younger singers that just because Charlie Parker improved on George Gershwin and Cole Porter doesn't mean they can—and that although Sinatra and Billie Holiday proved their musicianship by taking subtle liberties with melodies (the emphasis is on “subtle”), our identification with them resulted from their way with words. As long as I've appointed myself Simon Cowell, here are a few more tendencies I'd like to curb. Contrary to what most singers today seem to believe, scatting is as much about choosing the right harmonic intervals as it is about rhythm; so forget about it unless your pitch is as true as Fitzgerald's or Betty Carter's was. Don't do a song as a bossa nova unless it's a bossa nova. Don't write your own songs unless you have a knack for it. Don't try to woo aging Boomers by jazzing up soft-rock hits from the sixties and seventies.



Singers sell, or there wouldn't be a glut. At one point this summer they accounted for eight of *Billboard*'s Top 10 jazz CDs. Notably missing from the chart was the tepid Norah Jones, whom *Billboard* now lists under pop—which seems right given that her only connection to jazz is in singing an occasional standard and recording for the storied Blue Note label. But Jones has had an effect on jazz: the multi-platinum sales

of her *Come Away With Me* (2002) and *Feels Like Home* (2004) have raised the stakes impossibly high, creating widespread fear in the jazz community that Blue Note, Verve, and other labels will think twice about releasing instrumental albums destined to sell in the low five figures at best.

The most popular of the new jazz singers—Krall, Monheit, Jones, Madeleine Peyroux, Jamie Cullum, and Michael Bubl —have been greeted as if they represent the sudden reappearance of a species thought to have become extinct in the 1990s, with the deaths of Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine, Carmen McRae, Fitzgerald, Sinatra, Joe Williams, and Mel Torm . Nothing could be further from the truth. The next wave produced any number of fine singers: Betty Carter, Abbey Lincoln, Sheila Jordan, Shirley Horn, Etta Jones, Helen Merrill, Barbara Lea, Nancy Harrow, Carol Sloane, Irene Kral, Jeanne Lee, Jackie Paris, Bob Stewart, Mark Murphy, Andy Bey. But they were unknown to pop audiences and regarded as ancillary figures in jazz as it evolved beyond bebop. At one point or another, starting in the late 1960s, nearly all of them went years between recordings. They survived by working clubs and alternative performance spaces, by moving over to cabaret, or by cultivating followings in Europe and Japan.

They started faring better in the 1980s, but by then something indispensable had been sacrificed. My LP collection includes albums from the 1950s and early 1960s by such forgotten singers as Don Nelson, Marian Bruce, and Alice Darr. These recordings have aged well in part because they're from an era when some arrangers specialized in providing flattering showcases for singers, and when the leading jazz instrumentalists included plenty of sensitive accompanists. These are the species that have virtually disappeared, and today's new singers are at a disadvantage without them.

Bobby McFerrin and Harry Connick Jr., two of the most promising singers to emerge in the 1980s, haven't fulfilled their promise or always been faithful to jazz. But that supposedly fallow decade

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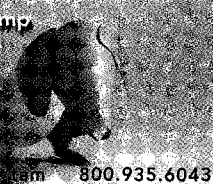
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also produced John Pizzarelli, Jay Clayton, Judy Niemack, Carla White, Amina Claudine Myers, and the late Susannah McCorkle.

Good singers are coming along today, too—they're just not the ones you hear the most about. Dianne Reeves has been around for years. Earlier in her career, from one overproduced album to another, she sounded like a mannered soul singer embracing jazz as a step up in class. But she came into her own on *A Little Moonlight* (2003), and her performances in George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck* are idiomatically true to the 1950s setting and a pure joy. Rebecca Kilgore and Daryl Sherman are the finest of a number of female singers who revive forgotten songs of the swing era and surround themselves with musicians who love Billie Holiday, Lee Wiley, and Mildred Bailey as much as they do. Bryan Anthony, whom I know only from a CD he released to little fanfare in 2001, evokes memories of the young Sinatra without trying to pass himself off as a reincarnation. (The nouveau crooner Michael Bublé supposedly makes you squeal, "I can't believe it's not Sinatra!" Well, I can.)

I could name others, but the ones I'm wild about are Susie Arioli and Luqman Hamza. Arioli, a Canadian, leads a band featuring her boyfriend, Jordan Officer, a deft, Django Reinhardt-style guitarist. *Learn to Smile Again* (Justin Time), her latest release, is a departure for her: an attempt to find common ground between jazz and country music. It's not a bad concept, but the downbeat mood and slowpoke tempo of the songs (six of them by Roger Miller, remembered for "King of the Road," which isn't one of them) prevent Arioli's customary lilt. A better introduction is *That's for Me* (2004), on the same label. A friend I sent a copy to described Arioli's voice as "yummy"—the word I'd been looking for. Her breathing is so sure (and she's so closely miked) that she lets us hear her inhale to begin each phrase of "On the Sentimental Side" before slowly releasing her breath in a lovestruck sigh over the length of the phrase, in keeping with the lyrics.

All I know about Hamza is that he's

based in Kansas City, accompanies himself on piano, and is old enough to have recorded as Larry Cummings in the 1950s. Released in 2000, *With This Voice* (Groove Notes) was only his second CD, and it's still his most recent—a shame, because it's so good it makes you want to hear more from him. Hamza specializes in ballads, and his diction may be the best I've heard from a male singer since Sinatra. On "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," the bonus track on the audiophile edition of the CD, it lets him deliver the line "so I chaffed them and I gaily laughed" without sounding like he's wandered in from another era. And both as a singer and as a pianist (his solo on "Weaver of Dreams" is a gem of thematic improvisation) he swings so effortlessly and in such a relaxed manner that he's never going to put anyone's foot to sleep.

So there are plenty of good singers around, and every once in a while one you've written off as hopeless can surprise you. A week or so after being disappointed by Monheit, I felt made whole again hearing Linda Ronstadt sing a sad love song from the 1950s called "Tell Him I Said Hello." The evidence points to Ronstadt as singer zero in the current epidemic. Female jazz singers in their thirties and early forties tend to name Holiday, Fitzgerald, and Vaughan as their primary influences, but I wonder how many of them were first exposed to older songs as teenagers by Ronstadt's three weepy and rhythmically flat-footed albums with Riddle. Twenty years later she's no match for the singer she was then, either in terms of range or in the purity of her upper register. But her voice is every bit as big, and there's a greater depth to it. She's gained a sense of dynamics, along with a maturity that lets her know when to hold something back. "Tell Him I Said Hello" followed me into the street, and as soon as I got home I reached for *Hummin' to Myself* (Verve), the CD Ronstadt had just released, to hear it again. So you never know. There may be hope even for Monheit and Krall. ▀

Francis Davis is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a columnist on jazz for The Village Voice. His latest book is Jazz and Its Discontents: A Francis Davis Reader.



FOOD

Domestic Reserves

*Americans no longer need to look abroad to satisfy their need for oil—
Tuscan-style olive oil, that is*

BY CORBY KUMMER

California olive oil is a tough sell. As made in the wine country north of San Francisco, it's in the Tuscan style, meaning pungent and bitter. Even cooks and eaters who have come to prize these qualities—who realize that both mean freshness, and that both are considered positive attributes—often balk at the Tuscan-style price, choosing instead a Spanish or a moderately priced Italian oil. Why pay so much for locally made oil?

One answer to my question presented itself beside a row of olive trees on the high hillsides of McEvoy Ranch, in Marin County near the border with Sonoma, an especially beautiful part of a famously beautiful area. It was early November, just as the harvest was getting under way, and the orchards were in a mild frenzy; the farm workers were checking trees every day to decide when to start picking. Following the suggestion of Shari DeJoseph, the orchard manager, I picked an olive, crushed it between my fingers,

and rubbed the oil, juice, and reddish-green pulp over the back of my hand. The fragrance was grassy and fresh but rich, too. The oil and pulp felt marvelously emollient on my hands, and also a bit sticky from the sugars that fresh olives contain, along with the very bitter substances that surprise first-time pickers who pop the berrylike fruit into their mouths. I licked off a bit of the oil (I like bitterness). This incomparable freshness is the best reason to buy California oil, and you'll be supporting an industry that after a decade of baby steps is taking its first strides.

The arrival of these very trees—now taller than I, with pert, tiny, glinting silver-green leaves and firm fruit almost ready to be picked—had been foretold in the early nineties, when I visited Tuscany's poshest olive-oil consultant, Maurizio Castelli, at one of the grand wineries he worked with. Castelli was instructing me on the olive varieties and harvesting methods that produce Tuscan oil's characteristic rasping catch

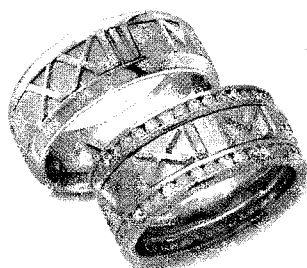
in the back of the throat, often heralded by an emerald-green tinge to the familiar gold. The Tuscan style of oil—powerfully fruity, challenging, and a bit rough—was then all the rage, and Tuscany was pushing Provence off the map of Edens for the well-heeled (could it be incidental that Provençal oil is mild and smooth?). Proponents of the Mediterranean diet were urging people to look for that bright green, which indicates the presence of chlorophyll and other artery-clearing antioxidants. If olives were part of the beautiful life of Tuscan winemakers, why shouldn't Californians in their own paradise plant olives where grapes grew?

Castelli guided me through a tasting he had carefully designed to show peppery Tuscan oils to maximum advantage, and to make me see non-green oils as dull, flaccid, and wimpy. At the end he told me he was very excited about one forward-looking Californian: "We've sent a woman in San Francisco a lot of plants, and we'll go over and produce oil for her." Tuscan oil made right in California, he said, would be the breakthrough that would educate American palates acculturated to wan, rancid oil.

The Californian was Nan McEvoy, a San Francisco newspaperwoman looking for her next adventure. The land on the Marin ranch she had bought was

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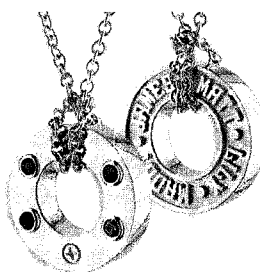


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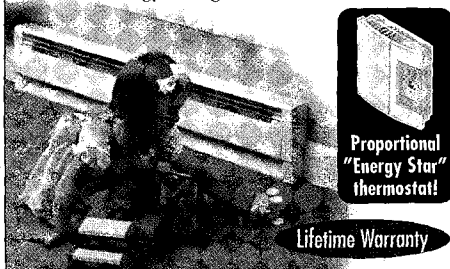
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restricted to agricultural use. Rather than buy more of the cows the previous owners had grazed on the hillsides, she thought of the Tuscan oils she had long loved, and ordered olive trees of the varieties Castelli recommended. She installed a crushing-and-processing mill right on the property: ideally, olives should be pressed immediately after being picked, before they can oxidize and begin to turn rancid.

Other landowners were trying to revive California's flagging industry, which began producing oil in the 1870s but had long ago turned mostly to curing and canning table olives. The chief exponents of Tuscan oil were McEvoy and Ridgely Evers. At the same time that McEvoy's trees were arriving in containers from Italian nurseries, Evers, who had done quite well as a software developer, was planting Tuscan varieties at DaVero, his property an hour or so north in Healdsburg, a Sonoma County town that was then still free of the Italianate gloss of Napa County. (It has since succumbed. Clothing and ceramics boutiques and gourmet markets outnumber the seventies-vintage general stores and barbershops that long persisted in Healdsburg's main square. But a few of its businesses are independent and even funky. You can still get what might be the country's best-made cappuccino at the Flying Goat, and my favorite muffin—really a cake doughnut, baked rather than fried—at the Downtown Bakery and Creamery.)

Planting and pressing olives requires very deep pockets. Several of the high-level hobbyists whose oils I tasted and admired in the first wave of the olive-oil revival (including my favorite of the time, Harrison Vineyards) have either gone out of business or gone back to growing the grapes they'd grown before. The industry is changing hands, from well-to-do dreamers with vision and taste to businesspeople intent on making oil pay.

I heard more about the economics when I joined the annual pick-your-own fest at DaVero, where dozens of guests meet on a November Sunday to strap on plastic buckets and try to fill them with olives. I was of course laughably



McEvoy Ranch olives just before harvest

slow compared with professional pickers, but even they can go only so fast. Unless trees are spaced and pruned to be mechanically harvested, as Colleen McGlynn, Evers's wife and partner, explained while we searched branches for hidden fruit, labor costs are prohibitive anywhere in this country. DaVero does not use machines to shake the trees, as many European growers do; the most mechanical help its crews get comes from vibrating combs on long broom handles, which they use to rake fruit off the branches and onto tarps spread on the ground. A pro working as we did would presumably fill a half-gallon bucket—the size we amateurs were using—in a fraction of the forty-five minutes it took me and two visiting San Francisco chefs to fill ours. (The buckets were a bit of Marie Antoinette milk-maidery; pros empty the tarps into big plastic crates.) Our forty-five minutes of labor would result at best, McGlynn estimated, in a tablespoon of oil.

To make us feel better, she pointed out the differences between picking olives and picking grapes. Olives are picked singly, grapes in bunches; in one day a crew of a dozen or so workers can pick three tons of olives, but just one worker can harvest two and a half tons of grapes. "The return on grapes is *sooo* much better," McGlynn said. "Why do you think Sonoma and Napa are planted in grapes? The minute they don't pay for themselves, a house goes up." And any oil producer must face the consumption discrepancy between wine and oil. People often pay \$35 to \$40 for a bottle of wine and then finish it in an eve-

ning. The same buyers will balk at spending the same amount for a bottle of oil—one it would take them several months to finish. "It's very, very hard to make money on olives," McGlynn said, sighing. "Maybe someday."

Nonetheless, membership in the California Olive Oil Council has expanded from barely two dozen ten years ago to 350, as Albert Katz, one of the first sellers of California oil and now a producer himself, pointed out in a recent conversation. (The council uses international standards to certify oil as extra-virgin—a designation that guarantees careful processing and the absence of defects more than it guarantees flavor. The term as yet has no legal meaning here, but the council has petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture to define it.) The new producers expect to break even—and are learning from the previous generation's experience. The first lesson is to avoid wine country, where land often costs \$20,000 to \$30,000 an acre. Small producers like Katz are also leasing instead of buying land, keeping down production costs, and focusing their marketing efforts. Several large producers have consolidated, hoping to find economies of scale. The largest—California Olive Ranch, in the Central Valley—has adopted a Spanish system (the owners are Spanish) of trellised trees for easy mechanical harvesting.

Katz told me that next year the state's output will most likely surpass that of France. "Yes, they aren't one of the biggest producers," he said. "But we never thought we'd be a player." (Spain, Italy, and Greece are the world's largest producers, followed by Tunisia, whose oil is often bottled in other countries and labeled as if it had been made there—something unscrupulous Californians have been caught doing too. Chile and New Zealand are the news in quality oil. As for bulk oil, the word in California is that China has planted 1.5 million trees, and though even California has almost double that number, any move the Chinese make worries the rest of the world.) Katz points to California Olive Ranch as an example of a Califor-

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Berkeley, CA, 800-865-4836, www.stonehouseoliveoil.com. Central Valley oil made from mostly traditional California varieties; the "house oil" is blended to be smooth and mild but not dull.

nia producer aiming to compete on the world market. "You can get a half liter at Trader Joe's for five dollars," he said. "And that's decent oil! It's certainly better than ninety-nine percent of imports, which probably aren't extra-virgin anyway. Ten years ago you couldn't have found a half liter of California oil for fifteen dollars."

Tastes have changed too. Tuscany will ever be popular, and the green antioxidant polyphenols that Tuscan-style oils contain will probably be found year by year to be yet more healthful. But even if they are lower in antioxidants, the milder, golden oils that traditional California table olives produce are perfectly good too—especially if the olives are harvested earlier and more carefully, as Tuscan producers have shown longtime California producers how to do. Regions with climates warmer

than Tuscany's, such as Puglia and Sicily, can pick much later, and historically they have, because riper olives produce more oil. For the same reason, growers in California's Central Valley, which has a warmer climate than Sonoma or Napa, historically picked late too. But earlier harvest makes for a brighter-tasting oil, even with varieties that will never have that Tuscan pungency.

"The American consumer prefers oils that are not bitter or pungent," says Darrell Corti, of Corti Brothers, in Sacramento, an authority on all foods and wines, especially those of California and Italy. He points out that after years of Tuscan experimentation, Californians interested in Italian olives are turning to southern varieties that might be better suited to the dry local climates (it rains in summer in Tuscany). As McEvoy Ranch and DaVero continue to take on Tuscany, fine-tuning vividly flavored "finishing" oils that are best drizzled on salads or thick soups (or, as Shari DeJoseph recommends, fried and poached eggs), other Californians are taking on much of the rest of Europe—and potentially satisfying the many Americans who like soft, easy oils.

Freshness, and a dash of patriotism, will sell California oil. So will the greatly improved overall quality I found on my recent trip, in a wide variety of styles and prices. But nothing sells oil better than olio nuovo, "new oil," and now is the time to order the last of this season's. As much a sauce as an oil, olio nuovo is unfiltered and contains bits of crushed fruit. It is irresistible on rustic bread that has been toasted and rubbed with a cut garlic clove to make the Tuscan *fettunta*, a celebratory seasonal snack. The flavors of olio nuovo are so lively and changeable that Ridgely Evers compares it to a teenager.

That freshness means volatility, so olio nuovo should be used fast—by the first flowering of spring, when the season's full-fledged oil, filtered and allowed to settle for a few months, appears. By that time the sediment in olio nuovo will have begun to oxidize in a dark pool at the bottom of the bottle, and the oil will become rancid. Some producers resist selling olio nuovo for

fear that customers will open a bottle after May and wonder what went wrong. But a number of the state's most notable producers take the risk, and it's worth calling (see box) to see who still has some available. Olio nuovo is like an instant snapshot of the season's oil; the first of the season's oil is like a fresh finished portrait. I plan to order bottles of each kind from DaVero: I intend to taste that tablespoon I picked.

OLIVE OIL AND WINE

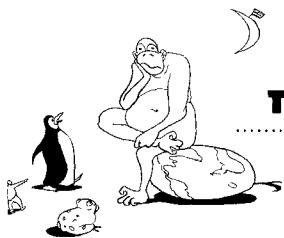
Suggestions for keeping it all Californian

On the theory that things that grow together taste good together, I asked Darrell Corti what wine would go well with a dish that features olive oil prominently—say, braised fennel with lemon and chicken stock, a dish that always brightens my winters, from the recipe in Barbara Kafka's encyclopedic new *Vegetable Love*, a book rich in olive-oil suggestions.

Corti recommended one from the foothills of the Sierras in the San Joaquin Valley, near olive orchards: President's Reserve Primitivo, made from the grape that is the genetic ancestor of Zinfandel. The name refers to the president of California State University at Fresno, the only four-year university with a commercial winery that operates as a teaching laboratory. Unlike the better-known teaching winery at the University of California at Davis, Fresno can sell its wine—which is made entirely by (supervised) students. They're doing well in their studies, as both Corti and Ken Fugelsang, a professor and the Fresno "winemaker," told me recently. The Primitivo won best of class in the Italian-varietals division of the 2002 LA County Fair, whose prizes carry weight for both wine and olive oil.

Fugelsang describes Primitivo as a subtler, better-integrated version of the familiar, powerfully fruity California Zinfandel. It's also much cheaper, at about \$10 a bottle (call 559-278-9463 to order it). Corti also highly recommends Fresno's "magisterial" Barbera, a usually expensive Piedmontese wine that sells for only \$13 a bottle. It would go well with the osso buco from Kafka's book—cooked, of course, with olive oil. ■

Corby Kummer is a senior editor of The Atlantic.



THE PUZZLER

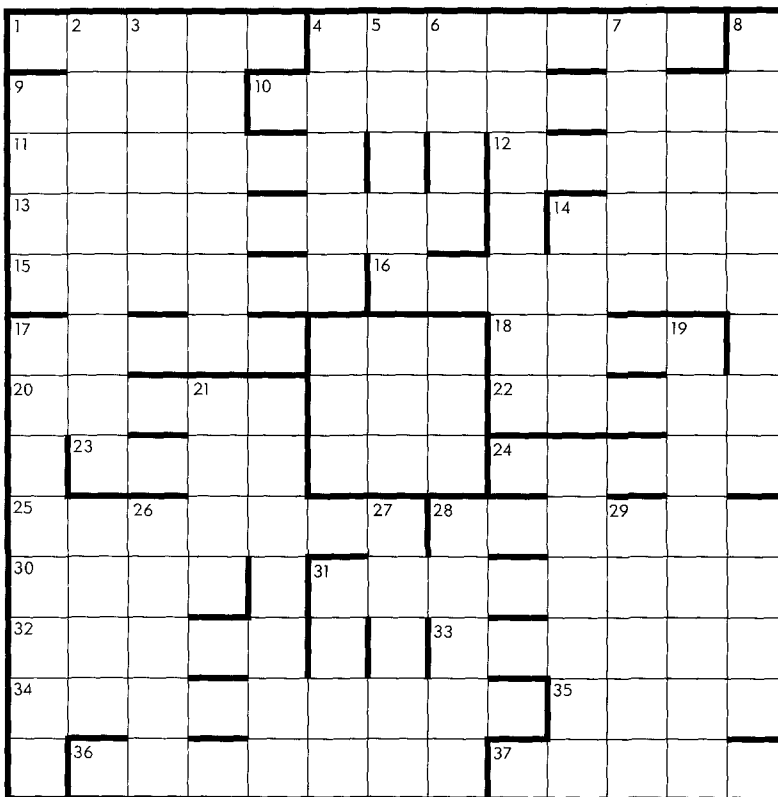
by EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON

Mysterious Island

Nine related entries, all going down, are unclued; each is missing one letter. Taken from their entries in order from left to right, the missing letters should be placed in the central island from left to right and top to bottom, where they will identify themselves. Although lengths are withheld, most clued entries are normal; in a few cases where clue answers cross, a letter is used in only one direction and should be ignored in the other direction. Half of these letters are used only by Acrosses and half only by Downs; when circled and read clockwise around the center from a spot to be determined, they will identify the mysterious island. Ten clue answers are capitalized.

Beginning with the March issue, the Atlantic Puzzler will be available online only, at www.theatlantic.com

Last month's Puzzler solution is on page 178.



ACROSS

1. Box, initially, for every one put ashore
4. Preserves harboring mean reptiles
9. Anti-art message from sponsors repeatedly brought back
10. Article I wrapped in red next to Persian poetry collection
11. Storied landing site for papyrus boat taken by a deserter
12. Agreeable resort on the Riviera
13. Pamphlets about Volume Five in crates
14. Noted Baptist I see in New Jersey flipped
15. Split about popular music insensitivity (*two words*)
16. *Babes*: It's about new lover
17. Greeting in misery, hug
18. Somewhat traditional opening for diggers
20. Jelly's cap is off
22. Magnificent suds seen from behind
23. Plant in wet ground and step on it
24. Small auto's signs of a mishap

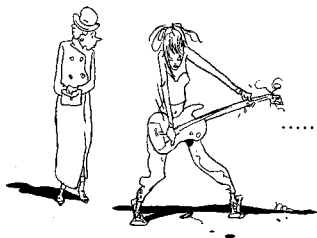
25. Sulk after runner split (*two words*)
28. Rodent breaking rib, leg
30. Screen siren's given name intoxicating to an audience
31. Beginning to drink sherry in a mournful way
32. School record returned
33. Shelter slowly accepting adult
34. Assuming need to pay, tear fell
35. Show appreciation for cold drink
36. Former name for a Beatle button used by callers (*two words*)
37. Reggae dance held by Alaskan kids

DOWN

2. Coming before—that is, right after—peer
3. Situation for a tennis player with a racket (*two words*)

5. A pitch by one game company
6. Bird is ingesting bismuth
7. Only adapted neutral material
8. Instruments suit lens poorly
9. Crackers down toward the back
14. Wear green gemstone
17. Stag gathering that lady's offering the worst conditions
19. Legendary knight's start in novel
21. Vague, losing the first guessing game (*two words*)
26. I had it accommodating old jerk
27. Bag holding last of layer cake
29. Toss back a rope with balls attached
31. Mysterious island's final craft

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, visit <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/puzzclue.htm>.



WORD COURT

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

DAVID PAISLEY, of Lakewood, Ohio, writes, "This drives me crazy: *service* used as a verb by supposedly intelligent people in the social-services profession. For instance, 'We *service* fifty clients a day' or 'Come to our seminar on *servicing* the mentally disturbed client.' My wife, who is a social worker, and I both feel that the only common usages of *service* as a verb apply to debt and prostitution. What's wrong with good old *serve*?"

My heart is with you, but let's give the devil his due: Is it fair to refuse the social *services* verbal liberties that we take with medical personnel? Physicians *doctor* patients, after all, and nurses *nurse* them, and psychiatrists *shrink* them. What's more, dictionaries don't support the idea that the verb *service* relates chiefly to debt and prostitution. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives five meanings for it, including "to be of service to; to serve; to provide with a service," and it cites Robert Louis Stevenson's 1893 book *Catriona*: "If I am to *service* ye the way that you propose, I'll lose my livelihood." Further, the way some dictionaries (the *OED* and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate* among them) give the sexual meaning of the verb is by referring the reader to *serve*. By cross-referencing the two words like this, a dictionary is saying that they have the meaning in common. (I'm not convinced that *serve* really is used much in this sense nowadays—but I can't prove it isn't.)

All the same, surely social-service professionals don't want to be making double entendres. And *serve* as an English verb meaning "render service" is about 600 years older than the verb *service*. An eternal tension exists between people's desire to elevate their language and their desire to keep it simple and clear. Just about every modern language expert there is, however, argues in favor of simplicity for anyone but a few lit-

erary stylists. When it means "provide service," *serve* is almost always simpler, more straightforward, and therefore better than *service*.

BETH PRATT, of El Portal, California, writes, "My boss and I are having a friendly grammatical dispute. He refuses to use any dictionary published later than the 1950s and strictly adheres to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. He claims that the possessive of a noun ending in a double *s* still requires the addition of the possessive *s*; I say proper usage calls for the



possessive *s* to be omitted. For example, he'd write 'my *boss's* ancient dictionary'; I write 'my *boss*' ancient dictionary.' My performance review is approaching, and a ruling in my favor might help me score some points."

I can't imagine that what I have to say will much help or hurt your review. This point of style is a swamp. Some reputable reference books come down on your side of the argument—for instance, *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage*. But more, and more widely used, reference books—including *The MLA Handbook* and *Garner's Modern American Usage*, in addition to *The Chicago Manual*—side with your boss. In fact, I side with him. *Boss*' doesn't look to me as if it should be pronounced "boss-ez," and

yet that is the way we ordinarily pronounce it.

Alas, pronunciation is not a reliable guide to spelling. We don't all pronounce words the same way, and even one person *might* pronounce a word differently in different contexts. A listener would hear *my boss's dictionary* as "my boss-ez," sure—but what about "my boss's stylebook"? Would that sound like "my boss-ez ..." or "my boss stylebook"? It might depend on how fast and carefully the speaker speaks. The guidelines in *The Associated Press Stylebook* are intended to encourage readers to move along smartly, so AP's rule for making possessives out of "singular common nouns ending in *s*" is "add *'s* unless the next word begins with *s*: *the hostess's invitation, the hostess' seat*."

Among the sources that unequivocally come out in favor of *boss's*, most make other exceptions to the general rule of using an apostrophe *s* for a singular possessive. *Chicago*, for instance, argues for four kinds of exceptions (words and proper names that are "plural in form, singular in meaning," multisyllabic names that end in an "eez" sound, words and names that end in an unpronounced *s*, and words and names that end in *s* in *for ... sake* expressions). See what I mean when I call this a swamp?

My advice would be to concede gracefully to your boss on possessives and concentrate on getting him to use a current dictionary (and the latest edition of *Chicago*, if he is clinging to an earlier one). How can he possibly decide whether and how to write *video camera* and *CAT scanner*, *bling-bling* and *phishing*, if his resources are half a century out of date?

Do you have a language dispute? Write to Atlantic Word Court, P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or send e-mail to msgrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court. Ms. Grammar is also on the Web, at www.theatlantic.com/courtrecord.

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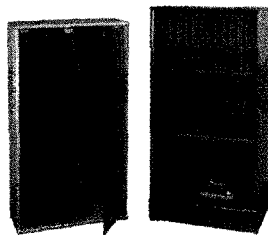
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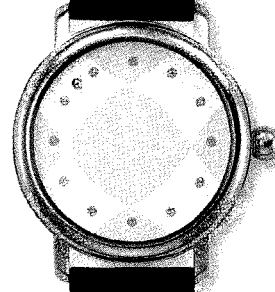
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Moustapha, Messenger of Hollywood

Moustapha Akkad (1935–2005)

BY MARK STEYN

When John Carpenter sold the idea for *Halloween* to Moustapha Akkad, he pitched it in one line: “Babysitter to be killed by the bogeyman.” “The babysitter part grabbed me,” Akkad said, “because every kid in America knows what a babysitter is.” The movie became the highest-grossing independent film to date and spawned the most successful of the several franchises in which undeserving victims are butchered at random in archetypal small towns.

By the time the bogeyman came for Moustapha Akkad, he had bigger fish to fry: mass slaughter not of stock types in hick burgs but of powerful and well-connected elites in Amman’s Western hotels. On November 9 a team of suicide bombers dispatched across the Jordanian border by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi self-detonated at the Radisson, the Grand Hyatt, and the Days Inn. Akkad was in Jordan for a high-society wedding and greeting his daughter Rima in the Radisson when Ali Hussein Ali al-Shamari and his wife reached into the folds of their clothing for the explosives belts. The California-raised Rima died first, her father two days later. And so the *jihadi* claimed among its five dozen latest victims Hollywood’s most prominent Arab-American.

Like a lot of youngsters, Akkad decided early on that he wanted to be in pictures. The odds aren’t helped if you happen to be growing up in Aleppo, in French Syria. But at eighteen he was packed off to Hollywood by his father with \$200 in one pocket and the Koran in the other, and the division of his coat contents neatly summed up his work over the next fifty years. Moustapha Akkad made two kinds of movies. As a producer he delivered slashers to the teen market with an efficiency that made him very wealthy: the original *Halloween* cost \$300,000 in 1978 and grossed \$47 million. As a director he

wanted to be an Arab David Lean, and specialized in films that used Hollywood stars to explain Islam to a wider audience: *The Message* was about the life of Muhammad and starred Anthony Quinn. *Lion of the Desert* celebrated plucky anti-colonial Bedouin fighters, played by Quinn, Oliver Reed, and John Gielgud, with members of Arab Equity relegated mostly to the roles of excitable extras. And at the time of his death Akkad was developing a film about Saladin with Sean Connery. It was his misfortune to have the benign intentions of this side of his oeuvre perpetually tripped up on the way to the multiplex. *The Message* was targeted by angry Muslims who thought the infidel fornicator Quinn was playing Muhammad rather than his uncle; and *Lion of the Desert* suffered in America from the twin PR setbacks of opening a few months after the Iranian hostage siege and being co-financed by Colonel Qaddafi.

Nonetheless, Akkad persevered. “Islam right now is portrayed as a ‘terrorist’ religion in the West and by doing this kind of movie, I am portraying the true image,” he said of his Saladin project. Long before September 11 he was always good for a quotation bemoaning how Hollywood represented Muslims only as terrorists. “We cannot say there are no Arab and no Muslim terrorists,” he told *The New York Times* in 1998. “Of course there are. But at the same time, balance it with the image of the normal human being, the Arab-American, the family man.”

He half got his way. Movies about the Arab “family man” are still thin on the ground, but the Muslim terrorist has all but disappeared: the film of Tom Clancy’s *The Sum of All Fears* de-Islamicized the bad guys and turned them into German neo-Nazis, and Sean Penn’s *The Interpreter* eighty-sixed the Muslims and made them terrorists

from the little-known African republic of Matobo. Post-9/11 Hollywood per-versely recoiled from its preferred villains of the 1980s and 1990s, and now your poor Arab thespian can’t even get gainful employment as a crazed *jihadi*. Meanwhile, Akkad saw the Islamophile half of his work win a new lease on life as Oriental works in an Occidentally accessible form: according to Queen Noor, the Pentagon bought 100,000 copies of *The Message* to show to U.S. troops before they left for Afghanistan.

And in the end, for all his efforts, the people who murdered Akkad were the most stereotypical Muslim terrorists of all: they behaved more like the psychos in his slasher movies than the noble Bedouin in his Islamic-outreach pictures.

The original *Halloween* introduced us to its highly resilient protagonist in a memorable and effective way: The hand-held Panaglide camera (a state-of-the-art novelty in 1978) roams around. It’s as if *we* are silently prowling the house, entering the kitchen, selecting the knife from the drawer, taking up a plastic clown mask and pulling it on, so that now we see the action only through two eyeholes. Up the stairs, into the bedroom; the girl dishabille at her dressing table turns, half irritated; and the knife goes in, again and again and again.

The filmmaker in Akkad might have found something similar in the husband-and-wife suicide-bomber team who killed him: Mrs. al-Shamari entering the Radisson, the camera’s eye nervously darting around, shuffling through to the ballroom; the guests standing about, Muslims holding their wedding party in a semi-Westernized style, the ladies with bright glossed lips and coiffed hair bursting through their perfunctory head coverings. What does the *jihadi* think? Is she disgusted? Or just concentrating on her mission? She struggles with the cord on her explosives belt, but it jams, and she tugs more frantically, and her husband sees her fumbling and pushes her out of the room, either in what passes for gallantry in the death cult or because he’s concerned she’ll jeopardize the operation. And then he pulls his cord, and he and the wedding party explode.

But Moustapha Akkad made Muslim movies and violent movies, and ne'er the twain did meet. His mentor was a master of the latter, Sam Peckinpah. In the late 1950s the director had in mind a film on the Algerian revolution, and asked UCLA to find him someone who knew the turf. The only graduate from that neck of the woods was Akkad. The French gave up on Algeria, and Peckinpah gave up on the picture, but he kept the young Syrian in tow for a movie called *Ride the High Country* (1962). At dinner in Hollywood, Akkad kept get-



ting asked what he thought of American food, American houses, American girls, so he sold a series to CBS in which a group of foreigners talk about their reactions to American life. Then he did a travel show with Cesar Romero, and pretty soon he had the career they'd said back in Aleppo was impossible: he was a Hollywood moviemaker.

Akkad prided himself on his "duality." "In my house I am a pure Arab," he told *The Star* in Jordan two years ago. "When I step out, I am thinking like an American." The "pure Arabs" who killed him despise that kind of flexibility, and some Americans would raise an eyebrow at quite how pure an Arab he was in the privacy of his own home. In an interview

with Luke Ford for his 2002 book *The Producers*, he agreed with the author's estimate that Hollywood's muscle was "70 percent Jewish," but reckoned you got along fine as long as you steered clear of certain subjects. "The media runs the world," he said. "No tanks or planes. The media and the public companies. This is what *The Protocols of Zion* is all about. The Zionists, last century, were persecuted in Europe. So they immigrated to America. They had a target. They were united. They did not permit [statements] critical of Zion. They went all the way to control the world and to control the minds of the people through the media. There's a lesson to learn from them."

Anyone who's spent any time in the Middle East will have heard that, from Saudi businessmen and Bahraini doctors and Palestinian intellectuals and other urbane, educated Arabs of the kind you find in the bars and lounges of Hyatts and Radissons. But professed admiration for the cunning of the Zionists is a more unexpected cliché from a man enriched by Hollywood whose children went to Los Angeles high schools filled with the progeny of liberal Jews. In hindsight Akkad's "duality" seems more like professional schizophrenia. And though he claimed that *Halloween* was nothing more than a savvy commercial decision, for a schlock horror fest it was, as it happens, very Middle Eastern in its pathologies. Its principal character, Michael Myers (no relation to *Austin Powers*'s Mike Myers, though they're about the same age), begins his impressive tally of corpses with what can be seen as an old-fashioned Muslim "honor killing": he stabs his sister to death after she's had sex with her boyfriend. Its conflation of sexual insecurity and male violence is at least as relevant to Arab culture as it is to alienated losers in small-town America. The only difference is that unlike the various unprosecuted perpetrators of honor killings from Jordan to Pakistan, Michael Myers eventually winds up getting decapitated, in one of *Halloween*'s many sequels. "With *H20* we

chopped off his head," Akkad exulted, while leaving himself a loophole: "But was it really his head?"

The "duality" of Moustapha Akkad finally came together in one freakish finale at the Amman Radisson. But he'd encountered terrorism once before, nearly thirty years earlier. Many Muslim scholars were outraged by *The Message*—or, as it was then called, *Mohammed, Messenger of God*. Though Akkad had observed the prohibition against representations of the prophet, even a rumored glimpse of his shadow (which the director had at one time considered) provoked objections. Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, formerly a Seventh-Day Adventist called Ernest McGhee, decided to do something about the abomination. A dozen Muslims seized three buildings in Washington, D.C., and took 150 hostages, including (in an early example of the many internal contradictions of the Rainbow Coalition) the future mayor of Washington, Marion Barry. Barry was one of a couple of dozen injured. Jewish hostages were abused. A reporter was killed.

Khaalis had several demands, including a ban on Akkad's movie and the transfer of Muhammad Ali, among others, to his custody. The ambassadors of Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan stepped in and drew the kidnappers' attention to Surah 5:2 from the Koran: "Let not the hatred of some people in shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression and hostility on your part. Help ye one another in righteousness and piety."

It worked: Khaalis threw in the towel. Alas, by November 9, 2005, Islamic terrorism had refined its techniques beyond intercession. Explaining the success of the *Halloween* franchise, Moustapha Akkad said, "If you're locked inside a house and there's somebody there who wants to kill you, that could happen to anybody. You can relate." It was the bogeymen closer to home he couldn't relate to. ■

Mark Steyn is a columnist for Britain's Telegraph Group, the Chicago Sun-Times, and other publications.

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WHO'S WHO

A selective index to this month's issue, compiled by BENJAMIN HEALY

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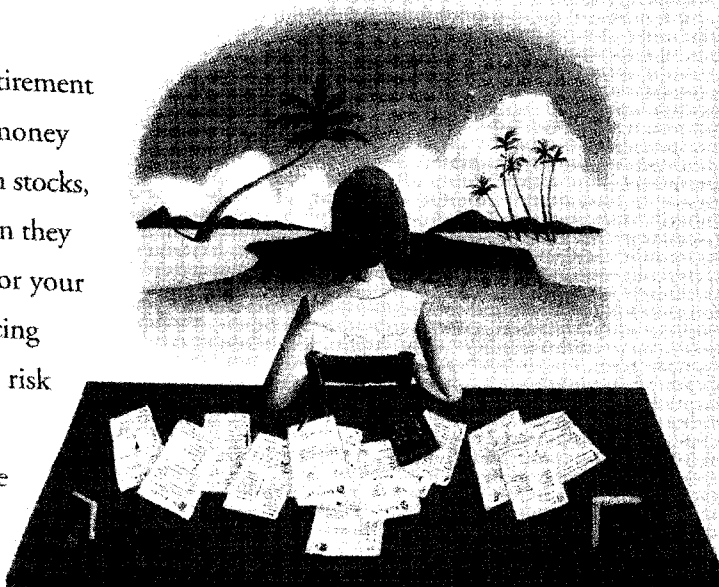
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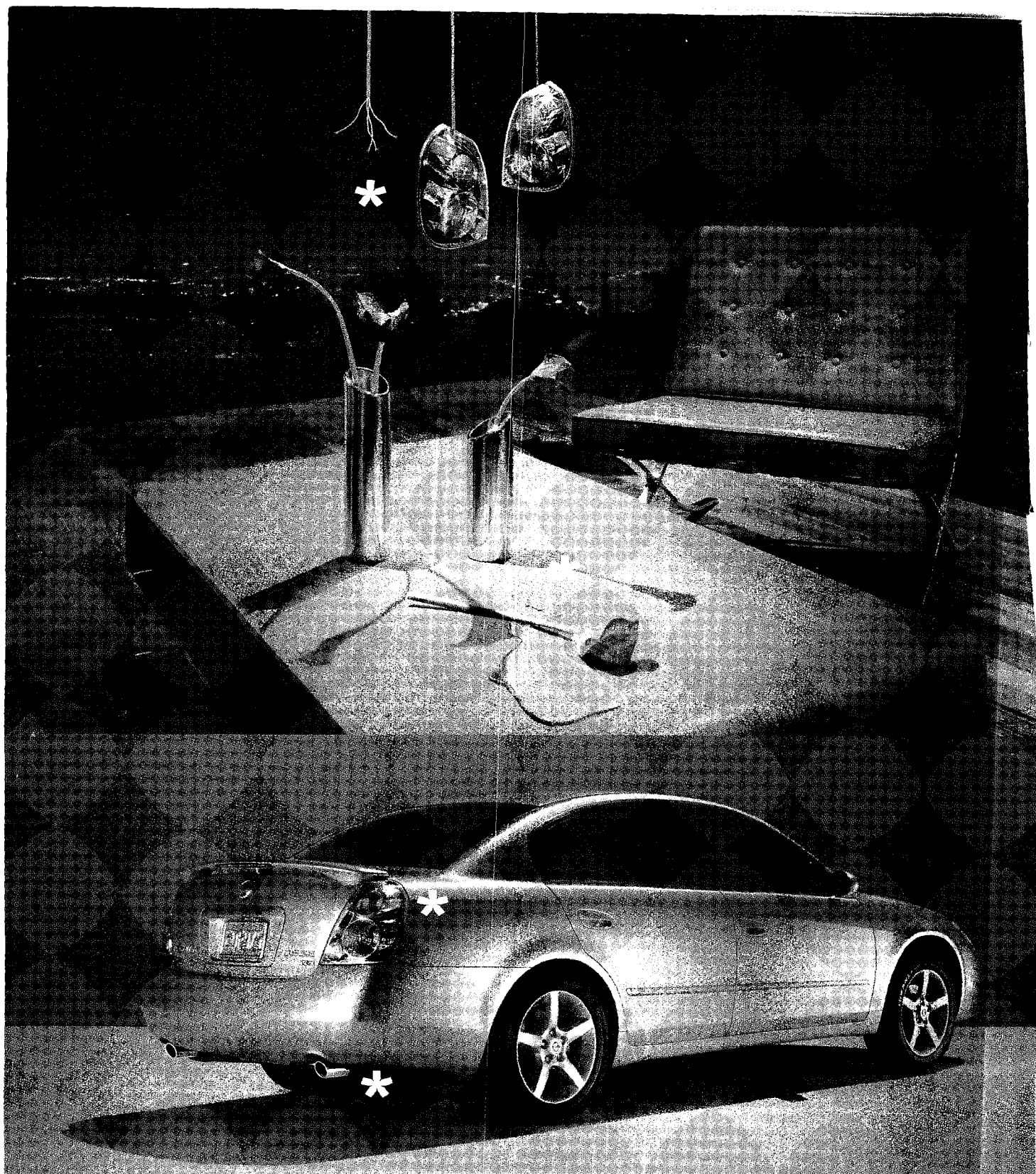


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